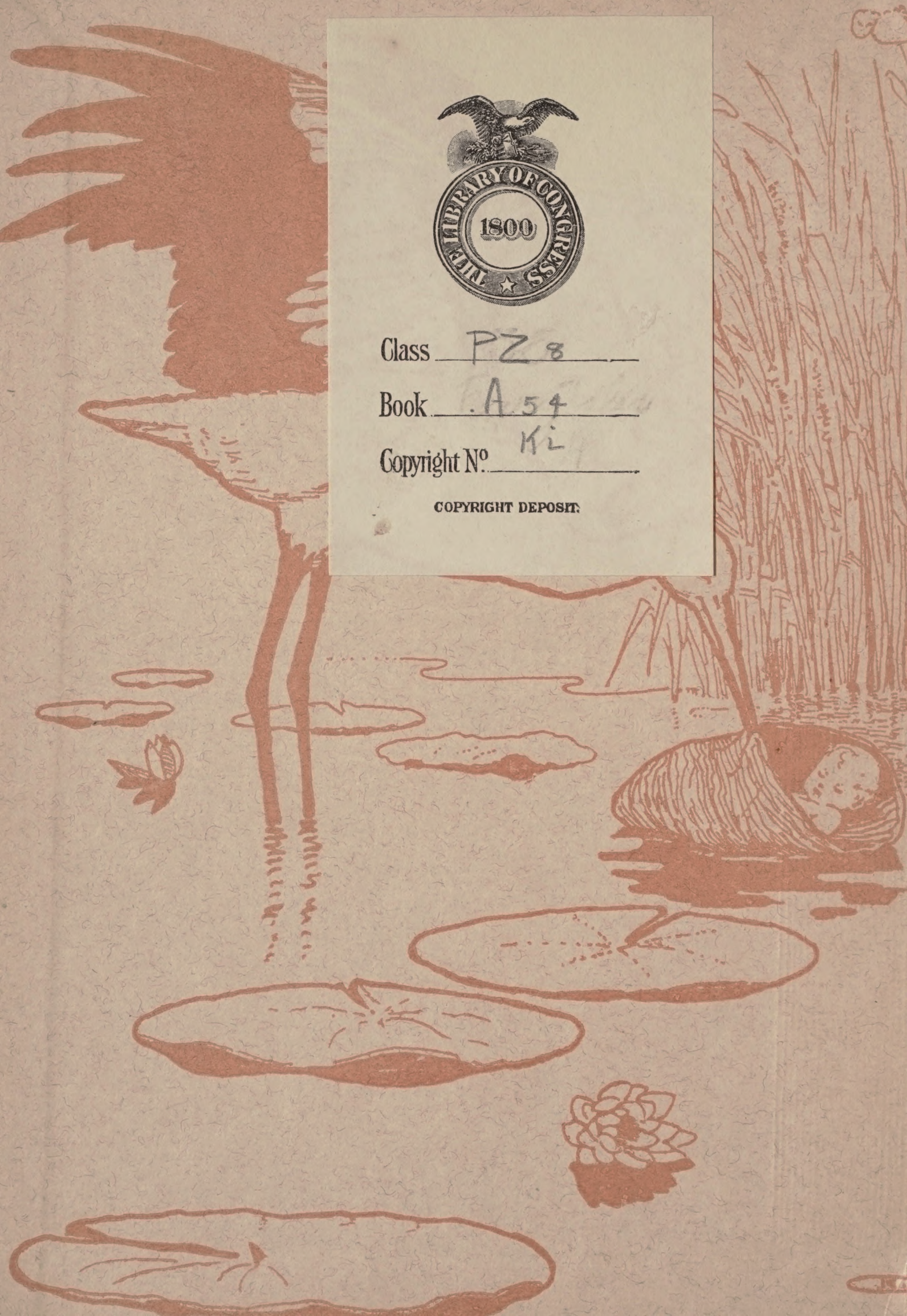
HANS ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES





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THEY MANAGED TO REACH THE EDGE OF THE CHIMNEY-POT, ON WHICH THEY SAT DOWN

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR BY
MARIA L. KIRK

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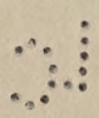


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FAIRY TALES.

THE LITTLE MERMAID.

FAR out at sea, the water is as blue as the prettiest corn-flowers, and as clear as the purest crystal. But it is very deep —so deep, indeed, that no rope can fathom it; and many church steeples need be piled one upon the other to reach from the bottom to the surface. It is there that the sea-folk dwell.

Nor must it be imagined that there is nothing but a bare, white, sandy ground below. No, indeed! The soil produces the most curious trees and flowers, whose leaves and stems are so flexible that the slightest motion of the waters seems to fluster them as if they were living creatures. Fishes, great and small, glide through the branches as birds fly through the trees here upon earth. In the deepest spot of all stands the sea-king's

palace; its walls are of coral, and its tall pointed windows of the clearest amber, while the roof is made of mussel-shells, that open and shut according to the tide. And beautiful they look; for in each shell lies a pearl, any one of which would be worthy to be placed in a queen's crown.

The sea-king had been a widower for many years, so his aged mother kept house for him. She was a very wise woman, but extremely proud of her noble birth, which entitled her to wear twelve oyster-shells on her tail, while other well-born persons might only wear six. In all other respects she was a very praiseworthy sort of body; and especially as regards the care she took of the little princesses her grand-daughters. They were six pretty children; but the youngest was the prettiest of all. Her skin was as clear and delicate as a rose-leaf, and her eyes as blue as the deepest sea; but she had no feet any more than the others, and her body ended in a fish's tail.

They were free to play about all day long in the vast rooms of the palace below water, where live flowers grew upon the walls. The large amber windows were opened, when the fishes would swim inwards to them just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows; only the fishes swam right up to the princesses, ate out of their hands, and allowed themselves to be stroked.

In front of the palace was a large garden with bright red and dark blue trees, whose fruit glittered like gold, and whose blossoms were like fiery sparks, as both stalks and leaves kept stirring continually. The ground was strewed with the most delicate sand, but blue as the flames of sulphur. The whole atmosphere was of a peculiar blue tint that would have led



SHE PLANTED A BRIGHT RED WEEPING-WILLOW BESIDE THE STATUE

you to believe you were hovering high up in the air, with clouds above and below you, rather than standing at the bottom of the sea. When the winds were calm, the sun was visible; and to those below it looked like a scarlet flower shedding light from its calyx.

Each of the little princesses had a plot of ground in the garden where she might dig and plant as she pleased. One sowed her flowers so as to come up in the shape of a whale; another preferred the figure of a little mermaid; but the youngest planted hers in a circle to imitate the sun, and chose flowers as red as the sun appeared to her. She was a singular child, both silent and thoughtful; and while her sisters were delighted with all the strange things that they obtained through the wrecks of various ships, she had never claimed anything—with the exception of the red flowers that resembled the sun above—but a pretty statue, representing a handsome youth, and hewn out of pure white marble, that had sunk to the bottom of the sea when a ship foundered. She planted a bright red weeping-willow beside the statue; and when the tree grew up, its fresh boughs hung over it nearly down to the blue sands, where the shadow looked quite violet, and kept dancing about like the branches. It seemed as if the top of the tree were at play with its roots, and each trying to snatch a kiss.

There was nothing she delighted in so much as to hear about the upper world. She was always asking her grandmother to tell her all she knew about ships, towns, people, and animals; what struck her as most beautiful was, that the flowers of the earth should shed perfumes, which they do not below the sea; that the forests were green; and that the fishes amongst the trees should sing so loud and so exquisitely, that it must be a

treat to hear them. It was the little birds that her grandmother called fishes, or else her young listeners would not have understood her, for they had never seen birds.

"When you have accomplished your fifteenth year," said the grandmother, "you shall have leave to rise up out of the sea, and sit on the rocks in the moonshine, and look at the large ships sailing past. And then you will see both forests and towns."

In the following year one of the sisters would reach the age of fifteen; but as all the rest were each a year younger than the other, the youngest would have to wait five years before it would be her turn to come up from the bottom of the ocean and see what our world is like. However, the eldest promised to tell the others what she saw, and what struck her as most beautiful on the first day; for their grandmother did not tell them enough, and there were so many things they wanted to know.

But none of them longed for her turn to come so intensely as the youngest, who had to wait the longest, and was so reserved and thoughtful. Many a night did she stand at the open window, and gaze upwards through the dark blue water, and watch the fishes as they lashed the sea with their fins and tails. She could see the moon and stars, that appeared indeed rather pale, though much larger, seen through the water, than they do to us. If something resembling a black cloud glided between the stars and herself, she knew that it was either a whale swimming overhead, or a ship full of human beings, none of whom probably dreamed that a lovely little mermaid was standing below, and stretching forth her white hands towards the keel of their vessel.

The eldest princess was now fifteen, and was allowed to rise up to the surface of the sea.

On her return she had a great deal to relate; but the most delightful thing of all, she said, was to lie upon a sand-bank in the calm sea, and to gaze upon the large city near the coast, where lights were shining like hundreds of stars; to listen to the sounds of music, to the din of carriages, and the busy hum of the crowd; and to see the church steeples, and hear the bells ringing. And she longed after all these things, just because she could not approach them.

Oh, how attentively her youngest sister listened! And later in the evening, when she stood at the open window, and gazed up through the dark blue water how she thought about the large city with its din and bustle, and even fancied she could hear the church-bells ringing from below!

In the following year, the second sister obtained leave to rise up to the surface of the water, and swim about at her pleasure. She went up just at sunset, which appeared to her the finest sight of all. She said that the whole sky appeared like gold; and as to the clouds, their beauty was beyond all description. Red and violet clouds sailed rapidly above her head, while a flock of wild swans, resembling a long, white scarf, flew still faster than they, across the sea towards the setting sun. She, too, swam towards it, but the sun sank down, and the rosy hues vanished from the surface of the water and from the skies.

The year after, the third sister went up. She was the boldest of them all; so she swam up a river that fell into the sea. She saw beautiful green hills covered with vines; castles and citadels peeped out from stately woods; she heard the birds singing, and the sun felt so warm, that she was frequently

obliged to dive down under the water to cool her burning face. In a small creek, she met with a whole troop of little human children. They were naked, and dabbling about in the water. She wanted to play with them, but they fled away in great alarm ; and there came a little black animal (she meant a dog,



CHILDREN PLAYING IN THE WATER

only she had never seen one before), who barked at her so tremendously, that she was frightened, and sought to reach the open sea. But she should never forget the beautiful forests, the green hills, or the pretty children, who were able to swim in the water although they had no fish's tails.

The fourth sister was less daring. She remained in the

midst of the sea, and maintained that it was most beautiful at that point, because from thence one could see for miles around, and the sky looked like a glass bell above one's head. She had seen ships, but only at a distance—they looked like sea-mews; and the waggish dolphins had thrown somersets, and the large whales had squirted water through their nostrils, so that one might fancy there were hundreds of fountains all round.

It was now the fifth sister's turn. Her birthday was in the winter, therefore she saw what the others had not seen the first time they went up. The sea looked quite green, and huge icebergs were floating about; each looked like a pearl, she said, only larger than the churches built by human beings. They were of the oddest shapes, and glittered like diamonds. She had placed herself upon the largest of them, and all the vessels scudded past in great alarm, as though fearful of approaching the spot where she was sitting and letting the wind play with her long hair; but towards evening, the sky became overcast, it thundered and lightened, while the dark sea lifted up the huge icebergs on high, so that they were illuminated by the bright flashes. All the vessels reefed in their sails, and their passengers were panic-stricken, while she sat quietly on her floating block of ice, and watched the blue lightning as it zig-zagged along the shining sea.

The first time that each of the sisters had successively risen to the surface of the water, they had been enchanted by the novelty and beauty of all they saw; but being now grown up, and at liberty to go above as often as they pleased, they had grown indifferent to such excursions. They longed to come back into the water, and at the end of a month they had all

declared that it was far more beautiful down below, and that it was pleasanter to stay at home.

It frequently happened in the evening, that the five sisters would entwine their arms, and rise up to the surface of the water all in a row. They had beautiful voices, far finer than any human being's; and when a storm was coming on, and they thought some ship likely to sink, they swam before the vessel, and sang most sweetly of the delights to be found beneath the water, begging the sea-farers not to be afraid of coming down below. But the sailors could not understand what they said, and mistook their words for the howling of the tempest; and they never saw all the fine things below, for if the ship sank, the men were drowned, and their bodies alone reached the sea-king's palace.

When the sisters rose up arm-in-arm through the water, the youngest would stand alone, looking after them, and felt ready to cry; only mermaids have no tears, and therefore suffer all the more.

"How I wish I were fifteen!" said she. "I am sure I shall love the world above, and the beings that inhabit it."

At last she reached the age of fifteen.

"Well! now you are grown up," said her grandmother, the widow to the late king. "So let me dress you like your sisters." And she placed in her hair a wreath of white lilies, every leaf of which was half a pearl; and the old dame ordered eight large oyster-shells to be fastened to the princess's tail, to denote her high rank.

"But they hurt me so," said the little mermaid.

"Pride must suffer pain," said the old lady.

Oh, how gladly would she have shaken off all this pomp, and

laid aside her heavy wreath—the red flowers in her garden adorned her far better—but she could not help herself. "Farewell!" cried she, rising as lightly as a bubble to the surface of the water.

The sun had just sunk as she raised her head above the waves, but the clouds were still pink, and fringed with gold; and through the fast-vanishing rosy tints of the air beamed the evening in all its beauty. The atmosphere was mild and cool, and the sea quite calm. A large ship with three masts was lying on its surface; only a single sail was hoisted, for not a breeze was stirring, and the sailors were sitting all about in the rigging. There were musical instruments playing, and voices singing; and when the evening grew darker, hundreds of gay-coloured lanterns were lighted, which swung aloft like the flags of all the nations in the world. The little mermaid swam close to the cabin-window, and as often as the water lifted her up, she peeped in through the transparent panes, and saw a number of well-dressed people. But the handsomest of all was the prince, with large black eyes; he could not be above sixteen, and it was his birthday that was being celebrated with such magnificence. The sailors danced upon deck; and when the young prince came up, above a hundred rockets were let off, that lit the air till it was as bright as day, and so frightened the little mermaid that she dived under the water. But she soon popped out her head once more, when all the stars in heaven seemed to be falling down upon her. She had never seen such fireworks: large suns were throwing out sparks, beautiful fiery fishes were darting through the blue air, and all these wonders were reflected in the calm sea below. The ship itself was thrown into such bright relief, that

every little cord was distinctly visible, and, of course, each person still more so. And how handsome the young prince looked, as he pressed the hands of those present and smiled, while the music resounded through that lovely night!

It was late. Still the little mermaid could not take her eyes off the ship or the handsome prince. The variegated lanterns were now extinguished, the rockets ceased to be let off, and no more cannons were fired; but there was a rumbling and a grumbling in the depths of the sea. Still she sat rocking up and down in the water, so as to peep into the cabin. But now the ship began to move faster, the sails were unfurled one after another, the waves ran higher, heavy clouds flitted across the sky, and flashes of lightning were seen in the distance. A tremendous storm seemed coming on, so the sailors reefed in the sails once more. The large ship kept pitching to and fro in its rapid course across the raging sea; the billows heaved, like so many gigantic black mountains, threatening to roll over the topmast; but the ship dived down like a swan between the high waves, and then rose again on their towering crests.

The little mermaid fancied this was a right pleasant mode of sailing; but the crew thought differently. The ship kept cracking and cracking, the thick planks gave way beneath the repeated lashings of the waves, a leak was sprung, the mast was broken right in twain like a reed, and the vessel drooped on one side, while the water kept filling the hold. The little mermaid now perceived that the crew were in danger, and she was herself obliged to take care not to be hurt by the beams and planks belonging to the ship, that were dispersed upon the waters. For one moment it was so pitch dark that she could see nothing; but when a flash of lightning illumined the sky,

and enabled her to discern distinctly all on board, she looked especially for the young prince, whom she perceived sinking into the water, just as the ship broke asunder. She was then quite pleased at the thought of his coming down to her, till she



THE LITTLE MERMAID RESCUES THE PRINCE

reflected that human beings cannot live in water, and that he would be dead by the time he reached her father's castle. But die he must not; therefore she swam towards him through the planks and beams that were driven about on the billows,

forgetting that they might crush her to atoms. She dived deep under the water, and then, rising again between the waves, she managed at length to reach the young prince, who was scarcely able to buffet any longer with the stormy sea. His arms and legs began to feel powerless, his beautiful eyes were closed, and he would have died had not the little mermaid come to his assistance. She held his head above the water, and then let the waves carry them whither they pleased.

Towards morning the storm had abated; but not a sign of the vessel was to be seen. The sun rose red and beaming from the water, and seemed to infuse life into the prince's cheeks; but his eyes remained closed. The mermaid kissed his high, polished forehead, and stroked back his wet hair; she fancied he was like the marble statue in her garden, and she kissed him again, and wished that he might live.

They now came in sight of land; and she saw high blue mountains, on the tops of which the snow looked as dazzlingly white as though a flock of swans were lying there. Below, near the coast, were beautiful green forests and in front stood a church or a convent—she did not rightly know which—but, at all events, it was a building. Oranges and lemons were growing in the garden, and tall palm-trees stood in front of the door. The sea formed a small bay at this spot, and the water, though very deep, was quite calm; so she swam with the handsome prince towards the beach, where the delicate white sands had formed a heap, and here she laid him down, taking great care that his head should be placed higher than his body, and in the warm sunshine.

The bells now pealed from the large white building, and a number of girls came into the garden. The little mermaid then

swam farther away, and hid herself behind some high rocks that rose out of the water; and covering her head and bosom with foam, so that no one could see her little countenance, she watched whether any one came to the poor prince's assistance.

It was not long before a young maiden approached the spot where he was lying. She appeared frightened at first, but it was only for a moment, and then she fetched a number of persons; and the mermaid saw that the prince came to life again, and that he smiled on all those around him. But he did not send her a smile, neither did he know she had saved him: so she felt quite sad; and when he was led into the large building, she dived back into the water with a heavy heart, and returned to her father's castle.

Silent and thoughtful as she had always been, she now grew still more so. Her sisters inquired what she had seen the first time she went above, but she did not tell them.

Many an evening, and many a morning, did she rise up to the spot where she had left the prince. She saw the fruit in the garden grow ripe, and then she saw it gathered; she saw the snow melt away from the summits of the high mountains: but she did not see the prince, and each time she returned home more sorrowful than ever. Her only consolation was to sit in her little garden, and to fling her arm round the beauteous marble statue that was like the prince; but she ceased to tend her flowers, and they grew like a wilderness all over the paths, entwining their long stems and leaves with the branches of the trees, so that it was quite dark beneath their shade.

At length she could resist no longer, and opened her heart to one of her sisters, from whom all the others immediately learned her secret, though they told it to no one else except to

a couple of other mermaids, who divulged it to nobody except to their most intimate friends. One of these happened to know who the prince was. She, too, had seen the gala on ship-board, and informed them whence he came, and where his kingdom lay.

"Come, little sister!" said the other princesses; and, entwining their arms, they rose up, in a long row, out of the sea, at the spot where they knew the prince's palace stood.

This was built of bright yellow, shining stone, with a broad flight of marble steps, the last of which reached down into the sea. Gorgeous golden cupolas rose above the roof, and marble statues, closely imitating life, were placed between the pillars that surrounded the edifice. One could see, through the transparent panes of the great windows, right into the magnificent rooms, fitted up with costly silk curtains and splendid hangings, and ornamented with large pictures on all the walls, so that it was a pleasure to look at them. In the middle of the principal room, a large fountain threw up its sparkling jets as high as the glass cupola in the ceiling, through which the sun shone down upon the water, and on the beautiful plants growing in the wide basin that contained it.

Now that she knew where he lived, the little mermaid spent many an evening on the neighbouring water. She swam much nearer the shore than any of the others had ventured to do; nay, she even went up the narrow canal, under the handsome marble balcony, that threw its long shadow over the water. Here she would sit, and gaze at the young prince, who thought himself quite alone in the bright moonshine.

Many an evening did she see him sailing in his pretty boat, adorned with flags, and enjoying music: then she would listen

from amongst the green reeds; and if the wind happened to seize hold of her long, silvery white veil, those who saw it took it to be a swan spreading out his wings.

Many a night, too, when fishermen were spreading their nets by torchlight, she heard them speaking highly of the young prince; and she rejoiced that she had saved his life, when he was tossed about, half dead, on the waves. And she remembered how his head had rested on her bosom, and how heartily she had kissed him—but of all this he knew nothing, and he could not even dream about her.

She soon grew to be more and more fond of human beings, and to long more and more fervently to be able to walk about amongst them, for their world appeared to her far larger and more beautiful than her own. They could fly across the sea upon ships, and scale mountains that towered above the clouds; and the lands they possessed—their fields and their forests—stretched far away beyond the reach of her sight.

There was such a deal that she wanted to learn, but her sisters were not able to answer all her questions; therefore she applied to her old grandmother, who was well acquainted with the upper world, which she called, very correctly, the lands above the sea.

"If human beings do not get drowned," asked the little mermaid, "can they live for ever? Do not they die, as we do here in the sea?"

"Yes," said the ancient dame, "they must die as well as we; and the term of their life is even shorter than ours. We can live to be three hundred years old; but when we cease to be here, we shall only be changed into foam, and are not even buried below among those we love. Our souls are not immortal. We

shall never enter upon a new life. We are like the green reed, that can never flourish again when it has once been cut through. Human beings, on the contrary, have a soul that lives eternally —yea, even after the body has been committed to the earth— and that rises up through the clear, pure air, to the bright stars above! Like as we rise out of the water, to look at the haunts of men, so do they rise to unknown and favoured regions that we shall never be privileged to see."

"And why have we not an immortal soul?" asked the little mermaid, sorrowfully. "I would willingly give all the hundreds of years I may have to live, to be a human being but for one day, and to have the hope of sharing in the joys of the heavenly world."

"You must not think about that," said the old dame. "We feel we are much happier and better than the human race above."

"So I shall die, and be driven about like foam on the sea, and cease to hear the music of the waves, and to see the beautiful flowers, and the red sun? Is there nothing I can do to obtain an immortal soul?"

"No," said the old sea-queen; "unless a human being loved you so dearly that you were more to him than either father or mother; if all his thoughts and his love were centred in you, and he allowed the priest to lay his right hand in yours, promising to be faithful to you here and hereafter: then would his soul glide into your body, and you would obtain a share in the happiness awaiting human beings. He would give you a soul without forfeiting his own. But this will never happen! Your fish's tail, which is a beauty amongst us sea-folk, is thought a deformity on earth, because they know no better,—it is neces-

sary there to have two stout props, that they call legs, in order to be beautiful!"

The little mermaid sighed as she cast a glance at her fish's tail.

"Let us be merry," said the old dame; "let us jump and hop about during the three hundred years that we have to live —which is really quite enough in all conscience. We shall then be all the more disposed to rest at a later period. To-night we shall have a court ball."

On these occasions there was a display of magnificence such as we never see upon earth. The walls and the ceiling of the large ball-room were of thick though transparent glass. Hundreds of colossal mussel-shells—some of a deep red, others as green as grass—were hung in rows on each side, and contained blue flames that illuminated the whole room, and shone through the walls, so that the sea was lighted all around. Countless fishes, great and small, were to be seen swimming past the glass walls, some of them flaunting in scarlet scales, while others sparkled like liquid gold or silver.

Through the ball-room flowed a wide stream, on whose surface the mermen and mermaids danced to their own sweet singing. Human beings have no such voices. The little mermaid sang the sweetest of them all, and the whole court applauded with their hands and tails; and for a moment she felt delighted, for she knew that she had the loveliest voice ever heard upon earth or upon the sea. But her thoughts soon turned once more to the upper world, for she could not long forget either the handsome prince, or her grief at not having an immortal soul like his. She therefore stole out of her father's palace, where all within was song and festivity, and sat down

sadly in her own little garden. Here she heard a bugle sounding through the water.

"Now," thought she, "he is surely sailing about up above; he who incessantly fills all my thoughts, and to whose hands I would fain entrust the happiness of my existence. I will venture everything to win him, and to obtain an immortal soul. While my sisters are dancing yonder in my father's castle, I will go to the sea-witch, who has always frightened me hitherto, but now, perhaps, she can advise and help me."

The little mermaid then left her garden, and repaired to the rushing whirlpool, behind which the sorceress lived. She had never gone that way before. Neither flowers nor sea-grass grew there; and nothing but bare, grey, sandy ground led to the whirlpool, where the waters kept eddying like mill-wheels, dragging everything they clutched hold of into the fathomless depth below. Between these whirlpools, that might have crushed her in their rude grasp, was the mermaid forced to pass to reach the dominions of the sea-witch; and even here, during a good part of the way, there was no other road than across a sheet of warm, bubbling mire, which the witch called her turf-common. At the back of this lay her house, in the midst of a most singular forest; its trees and bushes were polypi—half animal, half plant—they looked like hundred-headed serpents growing out of the ground; the branches were long, slimy arms with fingers like flexible worms, and they could move every joint from the root to the tip. They laid fast hold of whatever they could snatch from the sea, and never yielded it up again. The little mermaid was so frightened at the sight of them that her heart beat with fear, and she was fain to turn back; but then she thought of the prince, and of the soul that human beings

possessed, and she took courage. She knotted up her long, flowing hair, that the polypi might not seize hold of her locks; and crossing her hands over her bosom, she darted along, as a fish shoots through the water, between the ugly polypi, that



ITS TREES AND BUSHES WERE POLYPI

stretched forth their flexible arms and fingers behind her. She perceived how each of them retained what it had seized, with hundreds of little arms, as strong as iron clasps. Human beings, who had died at sea, and had sunk below, looked like white skeletons in the arms of the polypi. They clutched rudders, too,

and chests, and skeletons of animals belonging to the earth, and even a little mermaid, whom they had caught and stifled—and this appeared to her, perhaps, the most shocking of all.

She now approached a vast swamp in the forest, where large, fat water-snakes were wallowing in the mire, and displaying their ugly whitish-yellow bodies. In the midst of this loathsome spot, stood a house built of the bones of shipwrecked human beings, and within sat the sea-witch, feeding a toad from her mouth, just as people amongst us give a little canary-bird a lump of sugar to eat. She called the nasty fat water-snakes her little chicks, and let them creep all over her bosom.

"I know what you want!" said the sea-witch. "It is very stupid of you, but you shall have your way, as it will plunge you into misfortune, my fair princess. You want to be rid of your fish's tail, and to have a couple of props such as those human beings have to walk about upon, in order that the young prince may fall in love with you, and that you may obtain his hand and an immortal soul into the bargain!" And then the old witch laughed so loud and so repulsively, that the toad and the snakes fell to the ground, where they lay wriggling about. "You come just at the nick of time," added the witch, "for to-morrow, by sunrise, I should no longer be able to help you till another year had flown. I will prepare you a potion; and you must swim ashore with it to-morrow, before sunrise, and then sit down and drink it. Your tail will then disappear, and shrivel up into what human beings call neat legs—but mind, it will hurt you as much as if a sharp sword were thrust through you. Everybody that sees you will say you are the most beautiful mortal ever seen. You will retain the floating elegance of your gait; no dancer will move so lightly as you, but every step you

take will be like treading upon such sharp knives, that you would think your blood must flow. If you choose to put up with sufferings like these, I have the power to help you."

"I do," said the little mermaid, in a trembling voice, as she thought of the prince and of an immortal soul.

"But bethink you well," said the witch: "if once you obtain a human form, you can never be a mermaid again! You will never be able to dive down into the water to your sisters, or return to your father's palace; and if you should fail in winning the prince's love to the degree of his forgetting both father and mother for your sake, and loving you with his whole soul, and bidding the priest join your hands in marriage, then you will never obtain an immortal soul! And the very day after he shall have married another, your heart will break, and you will dissolve into the foam on the billows."

"I am resolved," said the little mermaid, who had turned as pale as death.

"But you must pay me my dues," said the witch, "and it is no small matter I require. You have the loveliest voice of all the inhabitants of the deep, and you reckon upon its tones to charm him into loving you. Now, you must give me this beautiful voice. I choose to have the best of all you possess in exchange for my valuable potion. For I must mix my own blood with it, that it may prove as sharp as a two-edged sword."

"But if you take away my voice," said the little mermaid, "what have I left?"

"Your lovely form," said the witch; "your airy step, and your expressive eyes—with these you surely can befool a man's heart. Well? Has your courage melted away? Come, put out

your little tongue, and let me cut it off for my fee, and you shall have the valuable potion."

"So be it," said the little mermaid; and the witch put her cauldron on the fire to prepare the potion. "Cleanliness is a virtue!" quoth she, scouring the cauldron with the snakes that she had tied into a knot, after which she pricked her own breast and let her black blood trickle down into the vessel. The steam rose up in such fanciful shapes, that no one could have looked at them without a shudder. The witch kept flinging fresh materials into the cauldron every moment, and when it began to simmer it was like the wailings of a crocodile. At length the potion was ready, and it looked like the purest spring water.

"Here it is," said the witch, cutting off the little mermaid's tongue; so now she was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak.

"If the polypi should seize hold of you on your return through my forest," said the witch, "you need only sprinkle a single drop of this potion over them, and their arms and fingers will be shivered to a thousand pieces." But the little mermaid had no need of this talisman; the polypi drew back in alarm from her on perceiving the dazzling potion, that shone in her hand like a twinkling star. So she crossed rapidly through the forest, the swamp, and the raging whirlpool.

She saw her father's palace—the torches were now extinguished in the large ball-room—and she knew the whole family were asleep within, but she did not dare venture to go and seek them, now that she was dumb, and was about to leave them for ever. Her heart seemed ready to burst with anguish. She stole into the garden and plucked a flower from each of her sisters

flower-beds, kissed her hand a thousand times to the palace, and then rose up through the blue waters.

The sun had not yet risen when she saw the prince's castle, and reached the magnificent marble steps. The moon shone brightly. The little mermaid drank the sharp and burning potion, and it seemed as if a two-edged sword was run through her delicate frame. She fainted away, and remained apparently lifeless. When the sun rose over the sea, she awoke, and felt a sharp pang; but just before her stood the handsome young prince. He gazed at her so intently with his deep black eyes that she cast hers to the ground, and now perceived that her fish's tail had disappeared, and that she had a pair of the neatest little white legs that a maiden could desire. Only having no clothes on, she was obliged to enwrap herself in her long, thick hair. The prince inquired who she was, and how she had come thither; but she could only look at him with her mild but sorrowful deep blue eyes, for speak she could not. He then took her by the hand, and led her into the palace. Every step she took was, as the witch had warned her it would be, like treading on the points of needles and sharp knives; but she bore it willingly; and, hand in hand with the prince, she glided in as lightly as a soap-bubble, so that he, as well as everybody else, marvelled at her lovely airy tread.

She was now dressed in costly robes of silk and muslin, and was the most beautiful of all the inmates of the palace; but she was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak. Handsome female slaves, attired in silk and gold, came and sang before the prince and his royal parents; and one of them happening to sing more beautifully than all the others, the prince clapped his hands and smiled. This afflicted the little mermaid. She knew that she

herself had sung much more exquisitely, and thought: "Oh, did he but know that to be near him, I sacrificed my voice to all eternity!"

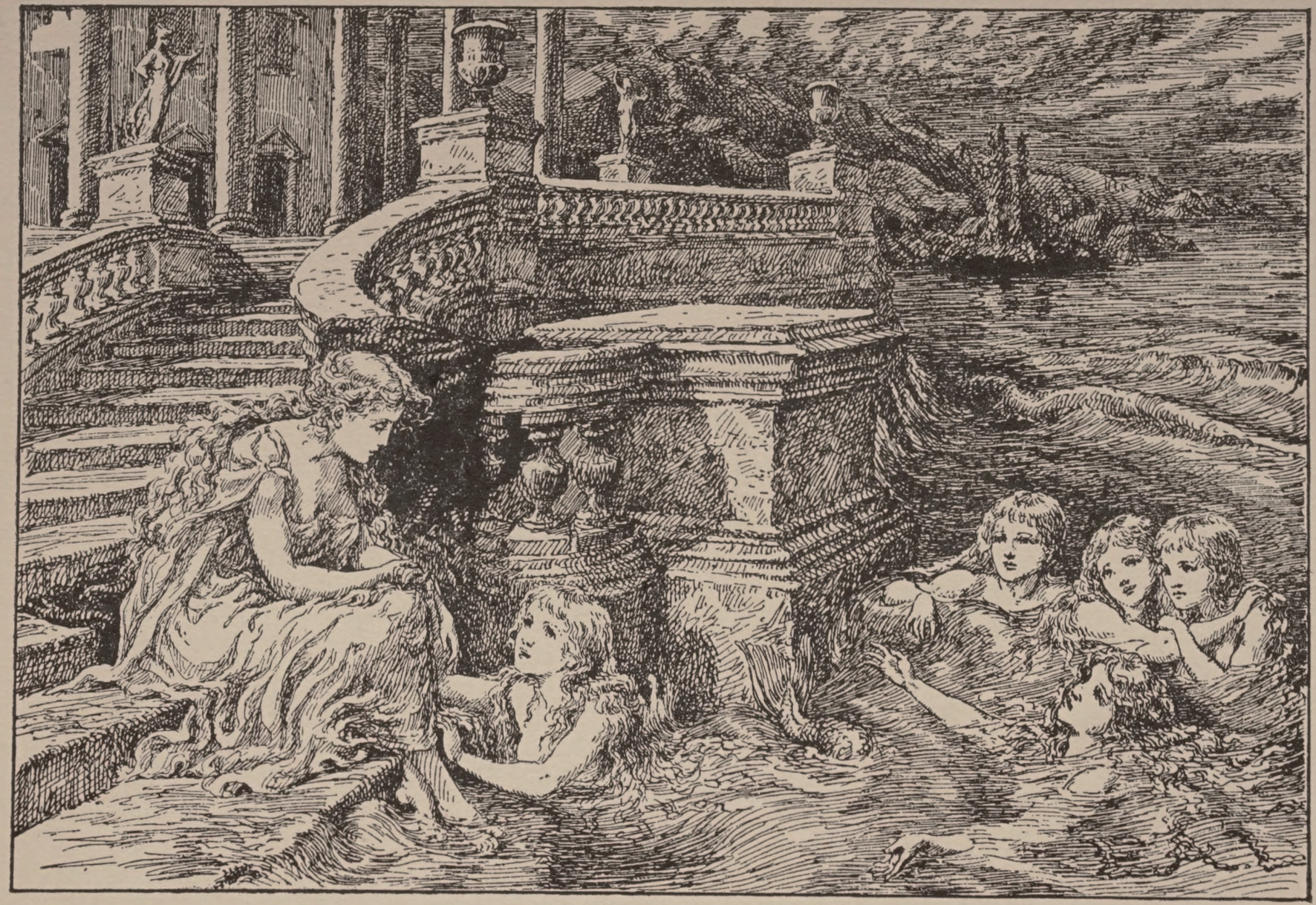
The female slaves now performed a variety of elegant, aërial-looking dances to the sound of the most delightful music. The little mermaid then raised her beautiful white arms, stood on the tips of her toes, and floated across the floor in such a way as no one had ever danced before. Every motion revealed some fresh beauty, and her eyes appealed still more directly to the heart than the singing of the slaves had done.

Everybody was enchanted, but most of all the prince, who called her his little foundling; and she danced on and on, though every time her foot touched the floor she felt as if she were treading on sharp knives. The prince declared that he would never part with her, and she obtained leave to sleep on a velvet cushion before his door.

He had her dressed in male attire that she might accompany him on horseback. They then rode together through the perfumed forests, where the green boughs touched their shoulders, and the little birds sang amongst the cool leaves. She climbed up mountains by the prince's side; and though her tender feet bled so that others perceived it, she only laughed at her sufferings, and followed him till they could see the clouds rolling beneath them like a flock of birds bound for some distant land.

At night, when others slept throughout the prince's palace, she would go and sit on the broad marble steps, for it cooled her burning feet to bathe them in the sea-water; and then she thought of those below the deep.

One night her sisters rose up arm-in-arm, and sang so mournfully as they glided over the waters! She then made them a



THE MERMAIDS VISIT THEIR SISTER

sign, when they recognized her, and told her how deeply she had afflicted them all. After that they visited her every night; and once she perceived at a great distance her aged grandmother, who had not come up above the surface of the sea for many years, and the sea-king with his crown on his head. They stretched out their arms to her, but they did not venture so near the shore as her sisters.

Each day she grew to love the prince more fondly; and he loved her just as one loves a dear, good child. But as to choosing her for his queen, such an idea never entered his head; yet, unless she became his wife, she would not obtain an immortal soul, and would melt to foam on the morrow of his wedding another.

"Don't you love me the best of all?" would the little mermaid's eyes seem to ask, when he embraced her, and kissed her fair forehead.

"Yes, I love you best," said the prince, "for you have the best heart of any. You are the most devoted to me, and you resemble a young maiden whom I once saw, but whom I shall never meet again. I was on board a ship that sank; the billows cast me near a holy temple, where several young maids were at their worship; the youngest of them found me on the shore and saved my life. I saw her only twice. She would be the only one that I could love in this world; but your features are like hers, and you have almost driven her image out of my soul. She belongs to the holy temple; and, therefore, my good star has sent you to me—and we will never part."

"Alas! he knows not that it was I who saved his life!" thought the little mermaid. "I bore him across the sea to the wood where stands the holy temple, and I sat beneath the foam

to watch whether any human beings came to help him. I saw the pretty girl whom he loves better than he does me." And the mermaid fetched a deep sigh; for tears she had none to shed. "He says the maiden belongs to the holy temple, and she will therefore never return to the world. They will not meet again, while I am by his side and see him every day. I will take care of him, and love him, and sacrifice my life to him."

But now came a talk of the prince being about to marry, and to obtain for his wife the beautiful daughter of a neighbouring king; and that was why he was fitting out such a magnificent vessel. The prince was travelling ostensibly on a mere visit to his neighbour's estates, but, in reality, to see the king's daughter. He was to be accompanied by a numerous retinue. The little mermaid shook her head and smiled. She knew the prince's thoughts better than the others did. "I must travel," he had said to her. "I must see this beautiful princess, because my parents require it of me; but they will not force me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her. She will not resemble the beautiful maid in the temple whom you are like; and if I were compelled to choose a bride, it should sooner be you, my dumb foundling, with those expressive eyes of yours." And he kissed her rosy mouth, and played with her long hair, and rested his head against her heart, which beat high with hopes of human felicity and of an immortal soul.

"You are not afraid of the sea, my dumb child, are you?" said he, as they stood on the magnificent vessel that was to carry them to the neighbouring king's dominions. And he talked to her about tempests and calm, of the singular fishes to be found in the deep, and of the wonderful things the divers saw

below; and she smiled, for she knew, better than any one else, what was in the sea below.

During the moonlit night, when all were asleep on board, not even excepting the helmsman at his rudder, she sat on deck, and gazed through the clear waters, and fancied she saw her father's palace. High above it stood her aged grandmother, with her silver crown on her head, looking up intently at the keel of the ship. Then her sisters rose up to the surface, and gazed at her mournfully, and wrung their white hands. She made a sign to them, smiled, and would fain have told them that she was happy and well off; but the cabin-boy approached, and the sisters dived beneath the waves, leaving him to believe that the white forms he thought he descried were only the foam upon the waters.

Next morning, the ship came into port at the neighbouring king's splendid capital. The bells were all set a-ringing, trumpets sounded flourishes from high turrets; and soldiers, with flying colours and shining bayonets, stood ready to welcome the stranger. Every day brought some fresh entertainment: balls and feasts succeeded each other. But the princess was not yet there; for she had been brought up, people said, in a far-distant, holy temple, where she had acquired all manner of royal virtues. At last she came.

The little mermaid was curious to judge of her beauty, and she was obliged to acknowledge to herself that she had never seen a lovelier face. Her skin was delicate and transparent, and beneath her long, dark lashes sparkled a pair of sincere, dark blue eyes.

"It is you!" cried the prince,—"you who saved me, when I lay like a lifeless corpse upon the shore!" And he folded his

blushing bride in his arms. "Oh, I am too happy!" said he to the little mermaid: "my fondest dream has come to pass. You will rejoice at my happiness, for you wish me better than any of them." And the little mermaid kissed his hand, and felt already as if her heart was about to break. His wedding morning would bring her death, and she would be then changed to foam upon the sea.

All the church-bells were ringing, and the heralds rode through the streets, and proclaimed the approaching nuptials. Perfumed oil was burning in costly silver lamps, on all the altars. The priests were swinging their censers; while the bride and bridegroom joined their hands, and received the bishop's blessing. The little mermaid, dressed in silk and gold, held up the bride's train; but her ears did not hear the solemn music, neither did her eyes behold the ceremony; she thought of the approaching gloom of death, and of all she had lost in this world.

That same evening, the bride and bridegroom went on board. The cannons were roaring, the flags were flying, and a costly tent of gold and purple, lined with beautiful cushions, had been prepared on deck for the reception of the bridal pair.

The vessel then set sail, with a favourable wind, and glided smoothly along the calm sea.

When it grew dark, a number of variegated lamps were lighted, and the crew danced merrily on deck. The little mermaid could not help remembering her first visit to the earth, when she witnessed similar festivities and magnificence; and she twirled round in the dance, half poised in the air, like a swallow when pursued; and all present cheered her in ecstasies,

for never had she danced so enchantingly before. Her tender feet felt the sharp pangs of knives; but she heeded it not, for a sharper pang had shot through her heart. She knew this was the last evening she should ever be able to see him for whom she had left both her relations and her home, sacrificed her beautiful voice, and daily suffered most excruciating pains, without his having even dreamed that such was the case. It was the last night on which she might breathe the same air as he, and gaze on the deep sea and the starry sky. An eternal night, unenlivened by either thoughts or dreams, now awaited her; for she had no soul, and could never now obtain one. Yet all was joy and gaiety on board till long past midnight; and she was fain to laugh and dance, though the thoughts of death were in her heart. The prince kissed his beautiful bride, and she played with his black locks; and then they went, arm-in-arm, to rest beneath the splendid tent.

All was now quiet on board: the steersman only was sitting at the helm, as the little mermaid leaned her white arms on the edge of the vessel, and looked towards the east for the first blush of morning. The very first sunbeam, she knew, must kill her. She then saw her sisters rising out of the flood. They were as pale as herself, and their long and beautiful locks were no longer streaming to the winds, for they had been cut off.

"We gave them to the witch," said they, "to obtain help, that you might not die to-night. She gave us a knife in exchange—and a sharp one it is, as you may see. Now, before sunrise, you must plunge it into the prince's heart; and when his warm blood shall besprinkle your feet, they will again close up into a fish's tail, and you will be a mermaid once more, and

can come down to us, and live out your three hundred years, before you turn into lifeless, salt foam. Haste, then! He or you must die before sunrise! Our old grandmother has fretted till her white hair has fallen off, as ours has fallen under the witch's scissors. Haste, then! Do you not perceive those red streaks in the sky? In a few minutes, the sun will rise, and then you must die!" And they then fetched a deep, deep sigh, as they sank down into the waves.

The little mermaid lifted the scarlet curtain of the tent, and beheld the fair bride resting her head on the prince's breast; and she bent down and kissed his beautiful forehead, then looked up at the heavens where the rosy dawn grew brighter and brighter—then gazed on the sharp knife, and again turned her eyes towards the prince, who was calling his bride by her name, in his sleep. She alone filled his thoughts, and the mermaid's fingers clutched the knife instinctively—but in another moment she hurled the blade far away into the waves, that gleamed redly where it fell, as though drops of blood were gurgling up from the water. She gave the prince one last, dying look, and then jumped overboard, and felt her body dissolving into foam.

The sun now rose out of the sea; its beams threw a kindly warmth upon the cold foam, and the little mermaid did not experience the pangs of death. She saw the bright sun, and above were floating hundreds of transparent, beautiful creatures; she could still catch a glimpse of the ship's white sails, and of the red clouds in the sky, across the swarms of these lovely beings. Their language was melody, but too ethereal to be heard by human ears, just as no human eye can discern their forms. Though without wings, their lightness poises them in

the air. The little mermaid saw that she had a body like theirs, that kept rising higher and higher from out the foam.

"Where am I?" asked she, and her voice sounded like that



THE CHILDREN OF THE AIR

of her companions, so ethereal, that no earthly music could give an adequate idea of its sweetness.

"Amongst the daughters of the air!" answered they. "A

mermaid has not an immortal soul, and cannot obtain one, unless she wins the love of some human being—her eternal welfare depends on the will of another. But the daughters of the air, although not possessing an immortal soul by nature, can obtain one by their good deeds. We fly to warm countries, and fan the burning atmosphere, laden with pestilence, that destroys the sons of man. We diffuse the perfume of flowers through the air to heal and to refresh. When we have striven for three hundred years to do all the good in our power, we then obtain an immortal soul, and share in the eternal happiness of the human race. You, poor little mermaid! have striven with your whole heart like ourselves. You have suffered and endured, and have raised yourself into an aërial spirit, and now your own good works may obtain you an immortal soul after the lapse of three hundred years."

And the little mermaid lifted her brightening eyes to the sun, and for the first time she felt them filled with tears. All was now astir in the ship, and she could see the prince and his beautiful bride looking for her, and then gazing sorrowfully at the pearly foam, as though they knew that she had cast herself into the waves. She then kissed the bride's forehead, and fanned the prince, unseen by either of them, and then mounted, together with the other children of the air, on the rosy cloud that was sailing through the atmosphere.

"Thus shall we glide into the kingdom of heaven, after the lapse of three hundred years," said she.

"We may reach it sooner," whispered one of the daughters of the air. "We enter unseen the dwellings of man, and for each day on which we have met with a good child, who is the joy of his parents, and deserving of their love, the Almighty

shortens the time of our trial. The child little thinks, when we fly through the room, and smile for joy at such a discovery, that a year is deducted from the three hundred we have to live. But when we see an ill-behaved or naughty child, we shed tears of sorrow, and every tear adds a day to the time of our probation."





THE DARNING-NEEDLE.

THERE was once a darning-needle that thought so much of herself that she fancied she was a sewing-needle.

"Only mind you hold me fast," would she say to the fingers that took hold of her, "and don't let me fall on the floor, or I should never be found again, I am so delicate."

"This will do," said the fingers, taking her up round the body.

"See, I come with a whole retinue!" said the darning-needle, drawing a long thread after her; only there was no knot at the end of the thread.

The fingers directed the needle towards the cook's slipper. The upper-leather had cracked, and it was to be sewed together.

"This is very coarse work," said the darning-needle, "I shall never get through—I shall break—I am breaking."

And sure enough she broke.

"Did I not say so?" said the darning-needle; "I am too delicate for such work!"

"The needle will be of no further use," said the fingers

though they still held it fast; and the cook dropped some wax on the needle, and fastened her neckerchief with it.

"There! now I am a breast-pin!" said the darning-needle. "I knew that I should rise in the world. If one has merit, one is sure to become something or other." And then she laughed in her sleeve—for nobody ever *saw* a darning-needle laugh—and there she stuck as proud as though she were sitting in a state-coach, looking all about her.

"By your leave—are you made of gold?" asked she of a neighbouring pin. "You have a very fine appearance, and a remarkable head, only it is very small! You must try and grow, for it is not everybody who has wax dropped upon them." And the darning-needle bridled up so proudly that she toppled over out of the neckerchief, and fell into the sink, which the cook was then cleaning out.

"Now I am going to travel," said the darning-needle, "but it is to be hoped I shall not get lost."

But in fact she was lost.

"I am too genteel for this place!" said she, as she lay in the sink. "But I know what I am, and that is some little comfort." And the darning-needle maintained her proud bearing and did not lose her good temper.

And all sorts of things swam over her, such as chips of wood, bits of straw, and pieces of old newspapers.

"See how they sail!" said the darning-needle. "They do not dream of what is sticking below them, though it is I who am sticking—who am sitting here! There goes a chip who thinks of nothing in the world but himself—a mere chip! There runs a straw, and how he turns and twists about! Don't be thinking only of your foolish self, or you will run against a

stone! There swims a piece of newspaper. His contents have been long since forgotten, and yet he is mightily proud. I am sitting still and am patient. I know what I am, and that I shall still remain, come what will."

One day something lay close to her that glittered so splendidly that the darning-needle fancied it must be a diamond; but it was merely a bit of glass, only as it shone so brightly, the darning-needle spoke to it, giving herself out as a breast-pin.

"You are a diamond, I presume?"

"Something of the kind."

So each imagined the other to be very valuable, and their conversation turned upon the haughtiness of the world.

"I lived in a damsel's box," said the darning-needle, "and this damsel happened to be a cook; she had five fingers on each hand; but anything more arrogant than those fingers I never saw. And yet they were only there for the express purpose of taking me out of the box, and putting me back into the box."

"Were they, then, of high descent?" inquired the piece of broken bottle.

"High descent? Oh dear, no!" said the darning-needle, "but haughty to the last degree. They were five brothers, all born fingers. They stood proudly beside each other, although they were of unequal heights; the outside one, namely, the thumb, was short and thick, and his position was beside the limb, and he had only one joint, and could only make a bow, but he said that any human being who had lost him was not fit for the army. His next neighbour, a thorough sweet-tooth, dipped into sweet and sour, pointed to the sun and moon, and formed the letters when they all wrote. Master Longman, the

middle finger, looked down upon all the others. Gold-collet, the fourth brother, wore a gold circlet round his body, and little Peter Spielmann did nothing at all, which he was very proud of. They were a set of boasters, and such they will remain, and that is why I left them."

"And now we lie here and glitter," said the piece of broken bottle.

Just then more water was poured into the sink, which overflowed, and the broken glass was carried away by the stream.

"So, he is off!" said the darning-needle. "I am left lying here, because I am too genteel—but that's my pride, and a laudable thing it is."

And she remained proudly stuck where she was, indulging in mighty grand thoughts.

"I could almost fancy that I was born of a sunbeam, I am so delicate! And it seems as if the sunbeams always tried to find me under the water. Alas! I am so delicate that my own mother would not be able to find me. If I still possessed my old eye, which was broken off, I think I should fain weep; but I will not—because it is not genteel to cry."

One day a couple of boys in the street were paddling in the gutter, where they turned up old nails, pennies, and such things. It was dirty work, but they seemed to delight in it.

"La!" cried one of them, who was pricked by the darning-needle, "here's a fellow!"

"I'm not a fellow, I'm a young lady," said the darning-needle; but nobody heard her.

The wax had disappeared, and she had grown black, but as blackness makes things appear slimmer, she fancied she was genteeler than ever.

"There comes an egg-shell sailing along," said the boys, who now stuck the darning-needle through the egg-shell.

"White walls and a black dress are very becoming," said the darning-needle, "only I can't see myself! I hope I sha'n't be sea-sick, for then I am afraid I should break."

But she was not sea-sick, and did not break.

"It is a good preservative against sea-sickness to have a steel stomach, and to bear in mind that one is something more than a mere human being! My feeling of sea-sickness is now over. The genteeler one is, the more one can endure."

"Crash!" said the egg-shell, as a wagon rolled over it.

"Mercy! what a weight!" said the darning-needle. "I shall be sea-sick! I shall break!"

But she did not break, though a heavy wagon went over her; she lay at full length in the road,—and there let her lie.

THE STORKS.

On the last house in a little village there was a stork's nest. The mother stork sat in the nest beside her four little ones, who were stretching forth their heads with their little black bills, that had not yet turned red. At a short distance, on the top of the roof, stood the father stork as stiff and bolt upright as well could be. He had drawn up one leg under him, in order not to remain quite idle while he stood sentry. One might have taken him to be carved out of wood, so motionless was he.

"It no doubt looks very grand for my wife to have a sentinel by her nest!" thought he. "They can't know that I am her husband, and they will of course conclude that I have been commanded to stand here. It looks so noble!" And he continued standing on one leg.

A whole swarm of children were playing in the street below; and when they perceived the stork, the forwardest of the boys sang the old song about the stork, in which the others soon joined. Only each sang it just as he happened to recollect it—

"Stork, stork—fly home and rest,
Nor on one leg thus sentry keep!
Your wife is sitting in her nest,
To lull her little ones to sleep.
There's a halter for one,
There's a stake for another;
For a third there's a gun,
And a spit for his brother!"



"Only listen to what the boys are singing!" said the young storks. "They say we shall be hanged and burned."

"You shouldn't mind what they say," said the mother stork; "if you don't listen it won't hurt you."



THE STORK'S NEST

But the boys went on singing, and pointing at the stork with their fingers. Only one boy, whose name was Peter, said it was

a shame to make game of animals, and would not join the rest. The mother stork comforted her young ones. "Don't trouble your heads about it," said she; "only see how quiet your father stands, and that on one leg!"

"We are frightened!" said the young ones, drawing back their heads into the nest.

Next day, when the children had again assembled to play, they no sooner saw the storks than they began their song—

"There's a halter for one,
There's a stake for another."

"Are we to be hanged and burned?" asked the young storks.

"No; to be sure not," said the mother. "You shall learn how to fly, and I'll train you. Then we will fly to the meadows, and pay a visit to the frogs, who will bow to us in the water, and sing 'Croak! croak!' And then we'll eat them up, and that will be a right good treat!"

"And what next?" asked the youngsters.

"Then all the storks in the land will assemble, and the autumn manœuvres will begin, and every one must know how to fly properly, for that is very important. For whoever does not fly as he ought, is pierced to death by the general's beak; therefore, mind you learn something when the drilling begins."

"Then we shall be spitted after all, as the boys said—and hark! they are singing it again."

"Attend to me, and not to them," said the mother stork. "After the principal review, we shall fly to the warm countries, far from here, over hills and forests. We fly to Egypt, where

there are three-cornered stone houses, one point of which reaches to the clouds—they are called Pyramids, and are older than a stork can well imagine. And in that same land there is a river which overflows its banks, and turns the whole country into mire. We then go into the mire and eat frogs."

"O—oh!" exclaimed all the youngsters.

"It is a delightful place truly! One can eat all day long, and while we are feasting there, in this country there is not a green leaf left upon the trees. It is so cold here that the very clouds freeze in lumps, and fall down in little rags." It was snow she meant, only she could not explain it better.

"Will the naughty boys freeze in lumps?" asked the young storks.

"No, they will not freeze in lumps, but they will be very near doing so, and they will be obliged to sit moping in a gloomy room, while you will be flying about in foreign lands, where there are flowers and warm sunshine."

Some time had now passed by, and the young ones had grown so big that they could stand upright in the nest, and look all about them; and the father stork came every day with nice frogs, little snakes, and all such dainties as storks delight in that he could find. And how funny it was to see all the clever feats he performed to amuse them. He would lay his head right round upon his tail; then he would clatter with his bill just like a little rattle; and then he would tell them stories, all relating to swamps and fens.

"Come, you must now learn to fly," said the mother stork, one day, and the four youngsters were all obliged to come out on the top of the roof. How they did stagger! They tried to

balance themselves with their wings, but they nearly fell to the ground below.

"Look at me," said the mother. "This is the way to hold your head! And you must place your feet so! Left! right! Left! right! That's what will help you forward in the world." She then flew a little way, and the young ones took a little leap without assistance—but plump! down they fell, for their bodies were still too heavy.

"I won't fly!" said one youngster, creeping back into the nest. "I don't care about going to warm countries."

"Would you like to stay and freeze here in the winter? and wait till the boys came to hang, to burn, or to roast you? Well, then, I'll call them."

"Oh, no!" said the young stork, hopping back to the roof like the others. On the third day they already began to fly a little, and then they fancied they should be able at once to hover in the air, upborne by their wings, and this they accordingly attempted, when down they fell, and were then obliged to flap their wings as quick as they could. The boys now came into the street below, singing their song—

"Stork, stork—fly home and rest."

"Shan't we fly down and peck them?" asked the young ones.

"No; leave them alone," said the mother. "Attend to me—that's far more important—one—two—three! Now let's fly round to the right. One—two—three! Now to the left, round the chimney. Now that was very well! That last flap of your wings was very graceful, and so proper, that you shall have leave

to fly with me to-morrow to the marsh. Several genteel families of storks are coming thither with their children; now let me see that mine are the best bred of all, and mind that you strut about with a due degree of pride, for that looks well, and makes one respected."

"But shan't we take revenge on the naughty boys?" asked the young storks.

"Let them scream away as much as they like. You can fly up to the clouds, and go to the land of the Pyramids, while they are freezing, and can neither see a green leaf nor eat a sweet apple."

"But we wish to be revenged," whispered the young ones amongst each other; and then they were drilled again.

Of all the boys in the street, none seemed more bent on singing the song that made game of the storks than the one who had first introduced it; and he was a little fellow, scarcely more than six years old. The young storks, to be sure, fancied that he was at least a hundred, because he was so much bigger than their parents; and besides, what did they know about the ages of children or of grown men? So their whole vengeance was to be aimed at this boy, because he had been the first to begin, and had always persisted in mocking at them. The young storks were very much exasperated, and when they grew bigger, they grew still less patient of insults, and their mother was at length obliged to promise that they should be revenged, but only on the day of their departure.

"We must first see how you will acquit yourselves at the great review. If you don't do your duty properly, and the general runs his beak through your breasts, then the boys will be in the right, at least so far. So we must wait and see."



FETCHING THE CHILDREN

"Yes, you shall see," said the youngsters; and they took a deal of pains, and practised every day, till they flew so elegantly and so lightly that it was a pleasure to see them.

The autumn now set in, when all the storks began to assemble and to start for the warm countries, leaving winter behind them. And there were evolutions for you! The young fledgelings were set to fly over forests and villages, to see whether they could acquit themselves properly, for they had a long voyage before them. But the young storks gave such proofs of capacity, that their certificate ran as follows—"Remarkably well—with the present of a frog and a snake." This was the most palpable proof of the satisfaction they had given; and they might now eat the frog and the snake, which they lost no time in doing.

"Now for our revenge!" said they.

"Yes, assuredly," said the mother stork; "and I have found out what would be the fairest revenge to take. I know where lies the pond in which all the little human children are waiting till the storks shall come and bring them to their parents. The prettiest little children lie sleeping there, and dreaming far more sweetly than they will ever dream hereafter. Most parents wish for such a little infant, and most children wish for a sister or a brother. Now we'll fly to the pond, and fetch one for every child who did not sing the naughty song, and make game of the storks."

"But the naughty, ugly boy, who was the first to begin singing it," cried the young storks, "what shall we do with him?"

"In the pond lies a little infant, who has dreamed itself to death. We'll take him home to the naughty boy, and then he'll

cry, because we've brought him a little dead brother. But as for the good boy—you have not forgotten him—who said it was a shame to make game of animals, we will bring him both a brother and a sister. And as the boy's name is Peter, you shall all be called Peter after him."

And all was done as agreed upon, and all storks were henceforth named Peter, and are called so still.



THE ELFIN MOUNT.

SOME large lizards were frisking about near a crevice in an aged tree ; and they understood each other vastly well, for they spoke the lizard language.

"What a fuss and buzzing there is in the old Elfin Mount," said one lizard. "I have not been able to sleep a wink these two nights ; I might just as well have had the toothache, for then I don't sleep either."

"There is something in the wind," said another lizard. "Since cockcrow this morning, the mount has been propped on four red stakes, and has been thoroughly aired. And the elfin girls have learned new dances. There is certainly something in the wind."

"Ay, I have spoken about it to an earth-worm of my acquaintance," said the third lizard. "The earth-worm had just come from the mount, where he had been wriggling about in the ground both day and night. He had heard a great deal, for the poor creature can't see, though he is a good hand at stealing

in and listening anywhere. They expect company in the Elfin Mount, and very grand company, but the earth-worm either would not or could not say who was coming. All the will-o'-the-wisps are bespoken for a procession of torches, as they call it, and the silver and gold, of which there is no lack in the mount, is to be polished and laid out in the moonshine."

"Who can the guests be?" asked all the lizards. "What can be in the wind? Do you hear what a humming and what a buzzing there is?"

At that moment the Elfin Mount opened, and an old elfin maiden came tripping out. She was the old elfin king's housekeeper, was distantly related to the family, and wore an amber heart on her forehead. Her feet moved so fast! Trip, trip! —how she did trip it, and right down into the sea to the night raven![1]

"You are invited to the Elfin Mount, and for this very night," said she; "but will you do us a great service by undertaking to deliver the invitations? You must do something to make yourself useful, as you don't keep house. We are going to have some very grand guests—magicians, to wit, who have something to say for themselves; and therefore the old elfin king wishes to receive them in great style."

"Who is to be invited?" said the night raven.

"All the world may come to our great ball, even human beings, provided they but talk in their sleep, or do anything else

[1] Formerly, when a ghost made its appearance, the preacher exorcised it, and made it return into the earth, and a stake was stuck up at the spot where this took place. At midnight was a cry of "Let go!" The stake was taken out, and the exorcised spirit flew away in the shape of a raven, with a hole in its left wing. This ghost-like bird was called a night raven.

in our line. But the first party is to be very select, and we shall only admit persons of the highest rank. I have had a dispute



THE LIZARDS WATCHING THE ELFIN GIRLS

with the elfin king, for I maintained that we ought not to admit

ghosts. The merman and his daughters are to be invited first, and, as it may not be agreeable to them to be on dry land, they shall have a wet stone, or perhaps something even better to sit upon, and therefore I should think they won't refuse this time. We must have all the old demons of the first class with tails, the hobgoblin and the gnomes, and I think we can't omit the grave-swine, the death-horse,[1] and the church-dwarf; it is true they belong to the ghostly world rather than to our people, but that is only by virtue of their office: they are nearly related to us, and visit us frequently."

"Caw!" said the night raven, as he flew away to invite the guests.

The elfin girls were already dancing on the Elfin Mount, and they danced with shawls woven with mist and moonshine, which looked very pretty to those who like such things. The large ball-room in the middle of the mount was handsomely decorated; the floor had been washed with moonshine, and the walls rubbed with witches' grease, so that they glittered like tulip leaves in the light. In the kitchen a good many dishes were in preparation, such as roasted frogs, snail-skins, and a salad of mushroom-seeds, moist snouts of mice, and hemlock; then there was beer from the brewery of the swamp-wife, and glittering saltpetre wine from burial vaults. So much for the solid fare; and then there were rusty nails and church window glass for sweetmeats.

[1] According to a popular Danish superstition, a living horse must be buried under every church that is built; and his ghost is the death-horse that comes limping on three legs every night towards the house where anybody is about to die. Under some churches a living swine was likewise buried, whose ghost was called the grave-swine.

The old elfin king had his gold crown furbished up with pounded slate-pencil; and it was slate of the first layer too, which it is very difficult for an elfin king to obtain. Curtains were put up in the bedroom, and looped up with snails' slime. And a pretty hurry and bustle there was.

"We must now fumigate the place with horse-hair and hogs'-bristles, and then I think I shall have done my part," said the elfin housemaid.

"Papa," said the youngest daughter, "will you tell me now who our high-born guests are?"

"Well, I will," said he. "Two of my daughters must be prepared to marry, for two of them will certainly be married. The old gnome from Norway, who lives in the ancient Dovre Mountains, and who possesses many rocky castles on the cliffs, besides a gold mine, which is reckoned better still, is coming down with his two sons, who are looking out for wives. The old gnome is a true-hearted, honourable old Norwegian, both cheerful and plain-spoken. I knew him formerly, when we used to drink to our good-fellowship. He came hither to fetch his wife, who is now dead, and was daughter to the king of the chalk-pits of Mön. Oh! how I long to see the old Norwegian gnome once more! They say the boys are ill-bred, froward youths; but perhaps justice is not done them, and they may become better as they grow older. Let me see my family teach them good manners."

"And when are they coming?" said one daughter.

"That depends on wind and weather," said the elfin king. "They travel economically. They will wait for an opportunity of sailing in some ship. I wanted them to come across Sweden, but the old man was not inclined to do

so. He does not follow the march of the times, and that I can't bear."

Two will-o'-the-wisps now came skipping along—one faster than the other—and so, of course, one came in first.

"They are coming! they are coming!" cried they.

"Give me my crown, and let me stand in the moonshine," said the elfin king.

The daughters raised their shawls and curtseyed to the ground. There stood the old gnome of Dovre, with his crown of hardened ice and polished fir-apples. Besides this, he wore a bear-skin, and large warm boots, while the sons went with their necks bare, and without braces; for they were vigorous fellows.

"Is that a hill?" asked the youngest of the boys, pointing to the Elfin Mount. "In Norway we should call it a hole."

"Boys," said the old man, "a hole is scooped in, and a hill sticks out. Have you no eyes in your head?"

The only thing that surprised them thereabouts, they said, was that they could understand the language without more ado.

"Mind what you say," said the old man; "one would think you were unlicked cubs."

And then they entered the Elfin Mount, where the select company was assembled, as if blown together by the wind. But the preparations for the different guests were on a neat and elegant scale. The sea-folks sat at table in large tubs full of water, and they said it was just like being at home. They all behaved properly at table, except the two little northern gnomes, who sat with their legs on the table, because they thought they might do anything.



THE ELFIN GIRLS WERE NOW CALLED UPON TO DANCE

"Feet off from the board!" said the old gnome; and they obeyed, but not immediately. They tickled the ladies-in-waiting who served them at table, with fir-apples which they carried in their pockets; and then took off their boots, in order to sit more comfortably, and gave them the boots to hold. But their father, the old gnome of Dovre, was quite different from them; he told so pleasantly all about the stately northern rocks, and the waterfalls that dash down amidst white foam with a noise like thunder and an organ combined; and about the salmon that leaps up the rushing waters when the water-god plays on his golden harp; and about the bright winter nights, when the sledge-bells are tinkling, and boys are running with burning torches across the smooth ice, that is so transparent that they can see the startled fish under their feet. He told it so graphically, that one could see and hear all he described; it was as if the saw-mills were going, the lads and lasses singing songs and dancing; and then, all of a sudden, the old gnome gave the old elfin maiden such a kiss—a regular smack—and yet they were not related to one another.

The elfin girls were now called upon to dance; and they danced, first simply, and then with stamping of the feet, which had a very pretty effect; after which they executed solos and *pas de caractère.* Bless us! how they did shake their legs, and caper about! There was such a whirling, that one could not distinguish which were arms and which were legs; it was like the shavings of a sawing-mill flying about; and then round they spun like so many teetotums, till the death-horse and the grave-swine felt so sick and dizzy that they were obliged to leave the table.

"Whew!" cried the old gnome, "there's a to-do with legs

and feet! But what can they do besides dancing and twirling round like a whirlwind?"

"That you shall know presently," said the elfin king. And he then called his youngest daughter. She was nimble, and as transparent as moonshine, and was the most delicate-looking of all the sisters. She took a white chip of wood in her mouth, and then vanished. That was her accomplishment.

But the old gnome said he should not endure such an accomplishment in his wife, and that he did not suppose his boys would relish it either.

Another could walk by her own side, just as if she had a shadow, which gnomes have not.

The third was quite different; she had learned a thing or two in the swamp-wife's brewery, and had acquired the whole art and mystery of larding elfin forced-meat balls with glow-worms.

"She will be a good housewife," said the old gnome, merely bowing over his glass, for he did not wish to drink so much.

Now came the fourth daughter with a large harp; and no sooner had she struck the first string, than everybody lifted up their left leg, for gnomes are left-legged; and when she struck the second string, everybody was obliged to do just what she pleased.

"She's a dangerous woman," said the old gnome. But his two sons strolled out of the mount, for they had had enough.

"And what can the next daughter do?" asked the old gnome.

"I have learned to love everything Norwegian," said she, "and I will never marry unless it be to go to Norway."

But the littlest sister whispered in the old man's ear: "That is only because she heard from a Norwegian song that when the world is swallowed up, the northern cliffs will remain standing like so many grave-stones, and therefore she wants to be on the top of them, because she's so afraid of dying."

"Ho, ho!" said the old gnome, "was that the meaning of it? But what can the seventh and last do?"

"The sixth comes before the seventh," said the elfin king, for he could reckon; but the sixth daughter did not put herself forward.

"I can only tell people the truth," said she; "nobody troubles themselves about me, and I have enough to do to sew my grave-clothes."

Now came the seventh and last sister, and what could she do? Why, she could tell stories, and as many as ever she chose.

"Here are my five fingers," said the old gnome; "tell me a story for each of them."

And she took him by the wrist, and he laughed till he chuckled again; and when she came to the fourth finger, which had on a gold ring, just as if it knew that there was to be a betrothing, the old gnome said: "Hold fast what you have got; the hand is yours. I will marry you myself."

The elfin girl remarked that the story of the ring-finger and of little Peter Spielmann was still untold.

"We will hear them in the course of the winter," said the gnome; "and we'll hear all about the fir tree and the birch, and the presents of the sprites, and the tingling frost. You shall tell plenty of stories, for nobody can tell them properly up there.

And we'll sit in the rocky chamber, where pine chips are burning, and drink mead out of the golden drinking-horns handed down to us by the old Norwegian kings. The water-god gave me a couple of them; and while we sit enjoying ourselves, the water-nymph will come and pay us a visit, and sing you all the songs of the mountain shepherdesses. That will be right merry. The salmon, meanwhile, will be leaping in the waterfall, and lashing the stone walls with his tail—but he won't be able to come in. Yes, it is vastly pleasant to live in dear old Norway. But where are the youngsters?"

Where, indeed! They were running about abroad, and puffing out the will-o'-the-wisps, who had so kindly come to make up the torch procession.

"What pranks are you after?" asked the old gnome. "I have chosen a mother for you, so now you can take one of the aunts."

But the youths said they preferred making a speech, and toasting to their good-fellowship, for they had no inclination to marry. And then they made a speech, and drank to their good-fellowship, and turned their cups upside down, to show that they had drunk to the last drop. They next took off their coats, and lay down on the table to take a nap, for they made themselves quite at home. But the old gnome danced round the room with his young bride, and changed boots with her, which is genteeler than exchanging rings.

"The cock is crowing!" said the old elfin spinster, who took care of the household matters. "We must now close the shutters, not to be scorched by the sun."

And the mount then closed up.

But the lizards outside were running up and down the cracked tree, and saying to one another—"Oh! how the old Norwegian gnome pleased me!"

"The boys pleased me better," said the earth-worm. But then he could not see, poor, miserable animal!



THE NIGHTINGALE.

IN China, you know, the emperor is a Chinese, and all those about him are Chinamen. It is now many years ago—but for that very reason the story is better worth hearing before it is quite forgotten—the emperor's palace was the most magnificent in the whole world; it was built entirely of the finest porcelain, and was costly to a degree, but so brittle and so delicate, that one scarcely dared to touch it. In the garden might be seen the most singular flowers, and to the most beautiful of these were fastened little silver bells, that kept jingling so that one could not pass by without observing them. Everything in the emperor's garden was after the same fashion. The garden itself extended so far that even the gardener did not know where it ended. If you went beyond its limits, you reached a grand forest with lofty trees, and deep lakes. The forest sloped down to the deep blue sea; large ships could sail under its branches, in one of which dwelt a nightingale, that sang so sweetly that even the poor fishermen, who had something else to do, were fain to stand still and listen, whenever they heard her, as they went to spread their nets over-night. "Oh dear, how beautiful!" said they; and then they were forced to attend to their business, and forget the bird. Yet if the bird happened

to sing again on the following night, and any one of the fishermen came near the spot, he was sure to say to himself: "Dear me, how beautiful that is, to be sure!"

Travellers flocked from all parts of the earth to the emperor's capital, and admired it, as well as the palace and the garden. Yet when they came to hear the nightingale, they all declared: "This is better still."

And the travellers, on their return home, related what they had seen, and learned men wrote many volumes upon the town, the palace, and the garden. Nor did they forget the nightingale, which was reckoned the most remarkable of all; and those who could write poetry, penned the most beautiful verses about the nightingale in the forest near the lake.

The books circulated through the world, and some of them fell into the emperor's hands. He sat on his golden throne, and kept reading and reading, and nodding his head every moment, for he was delighted with the beautiful descriptions of the town, the palace, and the garden. "But the nightingale is the most lovely of all!" said the book.

"What is that?" said the emperor. "I don't know of any nightingale! Can there be such a bird in my empire, and in my very garden, without my having ever heard of it? Must I learn such things from books?"

He then called his lord-in-waiting, who was so grand a personage, that if any one of inferior rank to himself dared to speak to him, or ask him a question, he only answered: "P!" which meant nothing at all.

"This must be a very remarkable bird that is called a nightingale," said the emperor. "They say it is the finest thing in my large kingdom. Why was I never told anything about it?"

"I never heard of it before!" said the lord-in-waiting. "She has never been presented at court."

"I choose that she should come and sing before me this very evening," said the emperor. "The whole world knows what I possess, while I myself do not!"

"I never heard her mentioned before," repeated the lord-in-waiting, "but I will seek for her and find her."

But where was she to be found? The lord-in-waiting ran up and down all the stairs in the palace, looked through all the rooms and passages, but none of those whom he met had ever heard of the nightingale. So the lord-in-waiting returned to the emperor, and said that it must be a mere fiction invented by those who wrote the books. "Your imperial majesty is not to believe all that is written," said he, "these are mere poetical fancies, and what is called the black art."

"But the book in which I read this," said the emperor, "was sent to me by the high and mighty Emperor of Japan, and therefore cannot contain a falsehood. I will hear the nightingale! She must come hither this evening. She enjoys my gracious favour. And if she does not come, the whole court shall have their bodies trampled upon the moment the supper is over."

"Tsing-pe!" said the lord-in-waiting, and he again ran up and down all the stairs, and looked through all the rooms and passages, and half of the courtiers accompanied him in his search, for they did not relish the thought of being trampled upon. And there was a mighty inquiry after the wonderful nightingale, which all the world knew of, except those who resided at court.

At last they found a little girl in the kitchen, who said: "Oh dear! I know the nightingale well enough, and beautifully she

sings! I have leave to take home to my poor sick mother the scraps from the dinner-table; and she lives down by the shore, and when I come back and am tired, and sit down to rest in the forest, then I hear the nightingale sing. And the tears come into my eyes, and it is just as if my mother kissed me."

"Little maid," said the lord-in-waiting, "I will obtain for you a lasting situation in the kitchen, and permission to see the emperor dine, if you will show us the way to the nightingale, for she is bespoken for this evening."

And so they all went out into the forest, where the nightingale used to sing. Half the court was there. As they walked along, a cow began lowing.

"Oh," cried some of the young lords of the court, "now we've found her! What wonderful strength for so small an animal! I have certainly heard this before!"

"Nay, those are cows a-bellowing," said the little maid. "We are at a good distance yet from the spot."

The frogs now began to croak in a neighbouring marsh.

"Magnificent!" said the Chinese court-preacher, "now I hear her—it sounds like little church-bells."

"Nay, those are frogs," said the little maid, "but I think that we shall soon hear her now."

The nightingale then began to sing.

"There she is," said the little girl. "Hark! hark! And there she sits," added she, pointing to a little grey bird up in the boughs.

"Is it possible?" said the lord-in-waiting. "I should never have fancied her like that! How simple she looks! She has certainly lost her colour at seeing so many persons of rank around her."

"Little nightingale," cried the little maid aloud, "our most gracious emperor wishes you to sing before him."

"With the greatest pleasure!" said the nightingale, and sang so exquisitely, that it was a delight to hear her.



LISTENING TO THE NIGHTINGALE

"It sounds like glass bells," said the lord-in-waiting, "and look how her little throat is working! It is surprising that we never heard her before! She will have great *succès* at court."

"Shall I sing once more before the emperor?" asked the nightingale, who thought the emperor was there.

"My sweet little nightingale," said the lord-in-waiting, "I have the pleasure to invite you to a court assembly for this evening, at which you will enchant his Imperial Highness with your delightful singing."

"It is best when heard in the greenwood," said the nightingale; still she went willingly, on hearing the emperor wished it.

The preparations in the palace were magnificent. The walls and the floor, both of porcelain, were shining in the light of several thousand gold lamps; the rarest flowers, such as had a right to ring their bells, were placed in the passages. What with the running to and fro, and the draught, there was such a jingling of bells that one could scarcely hear oneself speak.

In the middle of the state-room where the emperor sat there was a golden perch for the nightingale. The whole court was present, and the little maid had leave to stand behind the door, as she had now obtained the title of a real court cook. All present were dressed in their best, and all eyes were turned towards the little grey bird, to whom the emperor now made a sign by nodding his head.

And the nightingale sang so exquisitely that tears came into the emperor's eyes. The tears rolled down his cheeks, and then the nightingale sang in still more touching strains, that went to one's very heart. And the emperor was so enchanted, that he declared the nightingale should have his golden slipper to wear round her neck. But the nightingale declined the honour with thanks: she was sufficiently rewarded already.

"I have seen tears in the emperor's eyes, and these are like the richest treasure to me! An emperor's tears possess a peculiar virtue! God knows that I am sufficiently rewarded." And thereupon she sang again in her sweet, melodious voice.

"This is the prettiest piece of coquetry that I know of," said the ladies present, and they put water into their mouths, to make a kind of liquid, clucking sound, when anybody spoke to them. They then fancied themselves nightingales. Even the footmen and chambermaids gave out that they were satisfied with the performance: and that is saying a great deal, for they are the most difficult to please. In short, the nightingale's success was complete.

She was now invited to take up her abode at court, where she was to have her own cage, besides the liberty of going out twice a day, and once in the night; on which occasions she was attended by twelve servants, each of whom had fastened a ribbon round her leg to hold her fast. There was no pleasure to be had in flying after such a fashion as that.

The whole talk of the town ran on no other subject than the wonderful bird. Eleven old-clothes-men's children were christened after her, but not one of them could sing a note.

One day the emperor received a large parcel, on which was written: "The Nightingale."

"Here's no doubt a new book about our celebrated bird," said the emperor. But instead of a book, it was a piece of mechanism that lay in a box—an artificial nightingale made to imitate the living one, only set all over with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. As soon as the artificial bird was wound up, it could sing one of the pieces that the real one sang; and then it wagged its tail up and down, all sparkling with silver and gold. Round its neck was slung a little ribbon, on which was written: "The Emperor of Japan's nightingale is poor indeed compared to that belonging to the Emperor of China."

"This is splendid," said all present, while he who had brought

the bird was immediately invested with the title of Imperial Chief Nightingale-bringer.

"Now they must sing together," said the courtiers, "and what a duet that will be!"



THE NIGHTINGALE WITH HER SERVANTS

And they were accordingly set to sing together. But it did not do, for the real nightingale sang after her fashion, and the artificial bird according to the barrel. "It is not the fault of the latter," observed the musical conductor, "for the bird is a good timeist, quite after my school." So the artificial bird was

made to sing alone. It obtained just as much success as the real bird, and then it was thought so much prettier to look at, for it sparkled like bracelets and breast-pins.

Three-and-thirty times did it sing the same piece without being tired. The company would willingly have heard it anew, but the emperor said that it was time the living nightingale should take her turn. But where was she? Nobody had remarked that she had flown out at the open window, and back to her green woods.

"How comes this?" said the emperor. And all the courtiers blamed her, and set down the nightingale for a most ungrateful creature.

"But we have the best bird left," said they; and accordingly the artificial bird was made to sing again, and they heard the same tune for the four-and-thirtieth time. Only they had not yet learned it by heart completely, for it was difficult to catch. And the conductor praised the bird to the skies, and even maintained that it was superior to a real nightingale, not only as regards outward appearance, and the profusion of diamonds, but in point of artistic merit.

"For you perceive, my gracious lord and emperor of us all," said he, "with a real nightingale you can never depend on what is coming; but with an artificial bird all is laid out beforehand. One can analyze it, one can open it, and show the human skill that contrived its mechanism, and how the barrels lie, how they work, and how one thing proceeds from another."

"Those are quite my own thoughts," said all present; and the musical conductor was allowed to exhibit the bird to the people on the following Sunday. And the emperor commanded that the people should likewise hear it sing. They accordingly heard it,

and were as delighted as though they had got drunk with tea, for it was so thoroughly Chinese. And they all cried out: "Oh!" and held up their forefingers, and nodded their heads. But the poor fisherman, who had heard the real nightingale, said: "It sounds prettily enough, and the melodies are all alike: but there's a something wanting, though I can't tell what."

The real nightingale was banished from the land.

The artificial bird was placed on a silk cushion beside the emperor's bed. All the presents of gold and precious stones which had been showered upon it, lay around, and the bird had risen to the title of Imperial Toilet-singer, and to the rank of number one on the left side. For the emperor reckoned the left side the noblest, as being the seat of the heart; for an emperor's heart is on the left, just as other people's are. And the conductor of the music wrote a work in twenty-five volumes about the artificial bird; which was so learned, and so long, and so full of the hardest Chinese words, that everybody said they had read it and understood it, for fear of being thought stupid, or being trampled to death.

A whole year passed by. The emperor and his court, and all other Chinese, now knew by heart every little flourish in the artificial bird's song. But that was the very reason why it pleased them better than ever, because they could now sing with the bird—which they accordingly did. The boys in the street would go about singing: "Zi-zi-zi—cluck-cluck—cooo-oo;" and the emperor sang it likewise. It was really quite delightful!

But one evening when the artificial bird was singing its best, and the emperor lay in bed listening, something inside the bird seemed to say: "crick!" Then a spring flew—whirr-r-r-r! All the wheels ran round, and suddenly the music came to a standstill.

The emperor jumped out of bed, and called for his physician. But of what use could he be? They next fetched a watch-maker; and after a deal of talking and examination, he managed to set the bird in order to a certain degree; but he said it must be used sparingly, for the uvula was worn away, and it was impossible to put in a new one so as to be sure not to injure the music. Here was a cause for deep mourning! The artificial bird was now only to be heard once a year, and that was almost too often for its safety. But the conductor of the music made a speech, consisting of very hard words, in order to prove that it was just as good as ever; and so, of course, it was considered so.

Five years had now flown past, when a real affliction threatened the land. The Chinese all loved their emperor, and he now lay so ill that it was said he could not recover. A new emperor was already chosen; and the people who stood outside in the street asked the lord-in-waiting how it fared with their old emperor? "P!" said he, shaking his head.

The emperor lay pale and cold in his fine large bed. The whole court thought he was dead, and everybody had run away from him to pay their respects to the new emperor. The valets had run away to prate about the event, and the chambermaids had a large company to coffee. Cloth coverings had been laid down in all the rooms and passages, that nobody's step might be heard, and therefore all was silent as the grave. But the emperor was not yet dead, though he lay stiff and pale in his magnificent bed, with its long velvet curtains and heavy gold tassels. High above was an open window, through which the moon shone down upon the emperor and the artificial bird.

The poor emperor could scarcely breathe; he felt as if a weight were lying on his chest; and on opening his eyes he saw

that it was Death who was sitting on his breast, and had put on his gold crown, and was holding the imperial sword in one hand, and his beautiful banner in the other. Strange heads were peeping out on all sides from the velvet bed-curtains, some of which were quite ugly, while others were mild and lovely. These were the emperor's good and bad actions, which looked him in the face now that Death was at his heart.

"Do you remember this?" whispered one after another. "Do you remember that?" and they told him so many things that the perspiration stood on his brow.

"I never knew it," said the emperor. "Music! music!—the large Chinese drum!" cried he, "to drown what they say!"

But they went on, and Death nodded to all they said, like a true Chinese.

"Music! music!" shouted the emperor; "you little charming golden bird, sing away!—sing, can't you! I have given you gold and precious stones, and I have even hung my golden slipper round your neck. Sing, I tell you, sing!"

But the bird remained silent. There was nobody there to wind it up; and without that it could not sing a note. And Death went on staring at the emperor with his hollow sockets, and a frightful stillness reigned around.

Suddenly a gust of melody sounded through the window. It proceeded from the little living nightingale, who sat on a bough. She had heard of her emperor's danger, and had hastened hither to sing hope and comfort to his soul. And as she sang, the phantoms grew fainter and fainter, while the blood began to circulate faster and faster through the emperor's weak limbs; and even Death listened, and said: "Go on, little nightingale, go on!"

"But will you give me that costly golden sword? Will you give me that rich banner? Will you give me the emperor's crown?"

And Death gave each of the baubles for a song; and the nightingale continued singing. She sang of the quiet churchyard, where the white roses blossom, where the elder sheds its perfumes, and where the cool grass is moistened by the tears of the survivors. Then Death longed to go to his garden; and he floated out through the window, like a cold, white mist.

"Thanks! thanks!" said the emperor, "you heavenly little bird! I know you well. I banished you from my dominions; and yet you have sung away those evil faces from my bedside, and expelled Death from my heart. How can I reward you?"

"You have rewarded me," said the nightingale. "I beguiled tears from your eyes the first time I sang,—I shall never forget that! Those are the jewels that rejoice a singer's heart. But now sleep and grow strong and healthy. I will sing to you."

And she sang, and the emperor fell into a sweet sleep. And most mild and beneficent was that slumber.

The sun was shining through the window when he awoke refreshed and restored to health. None of his servants had returned, for they thought he was dead; but the nightingale still sat and sang.

"You must always remain with me," said the emperor. "You shall only sing when you choose, and I will break the artificial bird into a thousand pieces."

"Do not do that," said the nightingale; "the bird did good as long as it could. Keep it as before. I cannot build my nest and live in the palace, but let me come when I have a mind and I will sit on the bough near the window of an evening, and

sing to you, that you may be at once glad and thoughtful. I will sing of the happy, and of those who suffer. I will tell of the bad and the good that is concealed from you by those about



THE EMPEROR CURED BY THE NIGHTINGALE

your person. For the little songster flies far around to the poor fishermen, and to the peasant's humble roof, and to all who live at so great a distance from yourself and your court. I love

your heart better than your crown ; and yet the crown has a perfume of sacredness about it too. I will come and sing to you ; but you must promise me one thing."

"All I possess !" said the emperor, as he stood in his imperial robes, which he had himself put on, and pressed his sword of weighty gold to his heart.

"One thing only I require of you : that is, to let no one know you have a little bird who tells you everything ; and all will be for the best."

And away the nightingale flew.

The servants came in to look after their late emperor. . . . When there they stood in amazement, on hearing the emperor say : "Good-morning !"





A GOOD LEAP.

THE flea, the grasshopper, and the cricket had once a mind to see who could leap the highest, so they invited the whole world, and whomsoever else might choose to come, to see the sight. And three famous jumpers they were, who were assembled in the room.

"I'll give my daughter to whichever leaps the highest," said the king; "for it would be too bad if these folks jumped for nothing."

The flea came first. His manners were very elegant, and he bowed to everybody, for he had noble blood in his veins on his mother's side, and was accustomed to the society of human beings, which makes all the difference.

Then came the grasshopper, who was certainly somewhat heavier, yet displayed a good figure that was set off by a becoming green uniform. Moreover, this personage maintained that he belonged to a very ancient family in Egypt, where he was thought very highly of. He had just been taken out of a field, and put into a summer-house, three storeys high, made of playing-cards, with the figured sides turned inwards. There

were both doors and windows cut out even in the body of the queen of hearts. "I sing so well," said he, "that sixteen native crickets, who had whistled from their early youth without being able to obtain a summer-house, fretted themselves still thinner than they were already when they heard me."

Both the flea and the grasshopper duly proclaimed who they were, and that they considered themselves fit to marry a princess.

The cricket said nothing, but he did not think the less, it is said, and when the watch-dog had merely sniffed him, he answered for it that the cricket was of good family, and was made out of the breastbone of a real goose. The old senator, who had obtained three orders for holding his tongue, maintained that the cricket was endowed with the faculty of prophecy, and that one could tell by his bone whether the winter would be mild or severe, which one could not ascertain from the breastbone of him who indites the almanack.

"Ay, I say nothing," observed the old king; "but I go my own ways, and have my own thoughts like other people."

And now the leap was to be taken. The flea jumped so high that nobody could see so far, and therefore they maintained that he had not leaped at all, which was quite contemptible on their parts.

The grasshopper only leaped half as high, but jumped right into the king's face, which his majesty said was not pretty behaviour.

The cricket stood still a long while, and was lost in thought, and people began to think at last that he could not jump at all.

"It is to be hoped he is not ill," said the watch-dog, smelling him once more. Whirr! Away he sprang, with a little



"SEE, I COME WITH A WHOLE RETINUE!" SAID THE DARNING-NEEDLE, DRAWING A LONG THREAD AFTER HER

sideways jerk, into the lap of the princess, who was sitting modestly on a golden stool.

Then the king said: "The highest leap is the one that aimed at my daughter, for that implies a delicate compliment. It wanted some head to hit upon such an idea; and the cricket has shown that he has a head."

So he obtained the princess.

"Yet I jumped the highest," said the flea. "But never mind! Let her have the goose's bone with the bit of stick and the pitch. I jumped the highest for all that. Only in this world one wants a body in order to be seen."

And thereupon the flea went into foreign service and got killed, it is said.

The grasshopper sat outside in the ditch, musing over the ways of the world. And he, too, said: "Body is everything! body is everything!" And then he sang his own melancholy song, from which we borrowed this story, which, although it be in print, may nevertheless be not quite true.



A TALE IN THE TEAPOT.

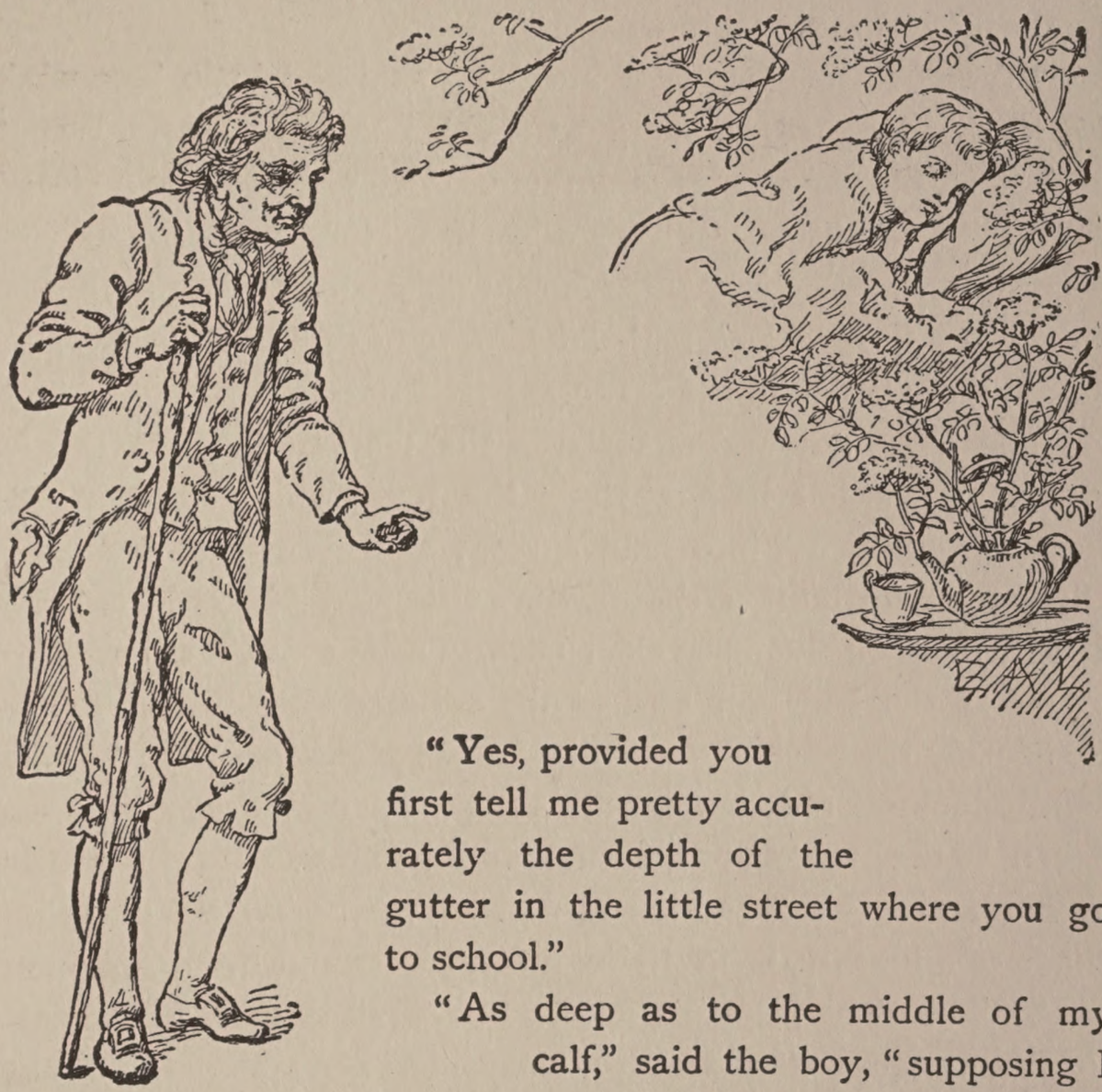
THERE was once a little boy who had caught cold by going out and getting his feet wet; though how he had managed to wet them nobody could tell, for the weather was quite dry. So his mother undressed him, and put him to bed, and had the tea-things brought in, to prepare him a good cup of elder-flower tea, which warms one so nicely. At the same moment, in came the friendly old man who lived quite at the top of the house, all alone—for he had neither wife nor children—but who was very fond of children, and knew a number of fairy tales and pretty stories, which it was a treat to hear him tell.

"Now, if you drink your tea," said the mother, "you will perhaps obtain a story to listen to meanwhile."

"Ay, if I did but know a new one," said the old man, nodding in a friendly manner. "But how did the little fellow wet his feet?" asked he.

"Why, that's what nobody can make out," said the mother.

"Shall I have a story?" asked the boy.



THE OLD MAN AND THE LITTLE BOY

"Yes, provided you first tell me pretty accurately the depth of the gutter in the little street where you go to school."

"As deep as to the middle of my calf," said the boy, "supposing I stood in the deepest hole."

"That's where we get our feet wet," said the old man. "Well, now I ought in turn to tell a story, only I have none left."

"But you can make one now, presently," said the little boy. "Mother says that everything you look at can become a story; and that you can turn everything you touch into a story."

"Ay, but that sort of story is good for nothing. The

real ones, such as arise of themselves, come and knock at my forehead, and say, 'Here we are!'"

"Won't there soon be a knock?" said the little boy, while his mother laughed, as she put the elder flowers into the teapot, and poured boiling water over them. "Now, do tell me a story."

"That would be all very easy if a story came of its own accord, but a story is a grandee that only comes when it chooses to do so. Stop a bit," added he, presently; "now we have it! Look, there is one in the teapot."

The little boy looked towards the teapot, and saw the lid rising higher and higher, while the fresh, white elder flowers kept sprouting out into long sprigs; and even from the spout there came forth other shoots, that extended everywhere, till at last there stood the finest elder bush, or rather tree, that extended as far as the bed, and pushed the curtains aside; and oh, how deliciously the blossoms smelt! In the middle of the tree sat a kindly-looking old dame, wearing a very odd dress, that was green as the leaves of the elder, and trimmed with white elder flowers; nor could one tell at first sight whether the dress was made of a texture, or of living green leaves and flowers.

"What is the woman's name?" inquired the boy.

"Why, the Greeks and Romans called her a Dryad," said the old man; "but we don't understand such words, and we have a better name for her out there in the suburb, where the sailors live; she is called among them, the Elder Mother,—and now you must attend to her; so listen while you look at this beautiful elder tree.

"Just such another large and blooming tree stands yonder, in a corner of a shabby little yard; and one sunny afternoon an old couple sat under its shade. It was an old sailor and his



IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TREE SAT A KINDLY-LOOKING OLD DAME

aged wife, who had lived to see their great grandchildren, and were soon to celebrate their golden wedding,[1] only they could not recollect the exact date of their marriage. And the Elder Mother sat in the tree, and looked so pleased, just as she does here. 'I know when the golden wedding is to be,' said she; only they did not hear her, for they were talking of old times.

"'And do you remember,' said the old sailor, 'when we were still little children, how we used to run about and play in this very yard, where we are now sitting, and how we planted little twigs, and made a garden?'

"'Yes,' said his old wife, 'I remember it well. And we watered the twigs, and one of them was a sprig of elder, that took root, and put forth green shoots, and in time became a large tree, under which we old folks are now sitting.'

"'Ay, to be sure,' said he, 'and there, in the corner, stands the tub where I used to float my little ship, that I had carved myself. And how it did sail! But I soon sailed in another sort of manner.'

"'Yes; but before that we went to school, and learned something,' said she; 'and then we were confirmed; we both cried; but in the afternoon we went hand in hand up the round tower, and saw the view out beyond Copenhagen, and across the water; and then we went to Friedrichsberg, where the king and queen were sailing on the canal, in their handsome boat.'

"'But I was to sail rather further than they, and that for many years, and bound for long voyages.'

"'And often enough I used to cry about you,' said she; 'for I thought you were dead and gone, and lay yonder in the deep

[1] The *Golden Wedding-day* is the fiftieth anniversary.

sea, rocked by the waves. And many a time did I get up in the night to look if the weathercock had turned—that it had, often enough, only it did not bring you back. I remember, as if it were but yesterday, how it poured with rain one day, as if heaven and earth were coming together. The carman, who used to fetch away the dust, came to the house where I was in



AT SCHOOL

service, and I took the dust-tub down-stairs, and stood in the doorway, and what shocking weather it was! And as I stood there the postman came, and gave me a letter that was from you. And how the letter had travelled about to be sure! I tore it open, and read it through; and laughed and cried—so pleased was I. And it said that you were in the warm lands,

where the coffee-berries grow. What a beautiful country that must be! You told of so many things, and there was I, reading and reading, while the rain kept pouring down, as I stood with the dust-tub, when somebody came and caught me round the waist.'

"'Ay, but you gave him such a smart box on the ears, that they tingled again.'

"'You know I could not guess it was you. You had arrived as quick as your letter, and you looked so handsome—and are so still for the matter of that. You had a large, yellow silk handkerchief in your pocket, and wore a shining hat. And you were so genteel! But, dear me! what dreadful weather it was, and how dirty the street did look!'

"'And then we married,' said he, 'do you remember? And then we had our first little boy, and next Marie and Niels, and Peter and Hans Christian!'

"'Yes, and how they all grew up and became proper sort of folks whom everybody likes!'

"'And now their children have little ones,' said the old sailor; 'ay, there are grandchildren for you!—made of the right sort of stuff, I warrant. It was towards this time of year, if I'm not mistaken, that we were married.'

"'Yes, to-day is the golden wedding-day,' said the Elder Mother, popping her head just between the two old folks, who thought it was their neighbour nodding to them; and they looked at each other and took each other's hand. Presently came their children, and children's children, who were well aware that it was their golden wedding-day, and had wished them joy of it that very morning, only the old couple had forgotten it, though they remembered so distinctly what had taken place

years before. And the elder tree perfumed the air most deliciously, while the sinking sun shone right in the faces of the old people, and imparted a rosy hue to their cheeks; and the youngest of their children's children danced about, crying out



THE OLD PEOPLE'S GRANDCHILDREN

joyfully what a treat they were going to have that evening, and that there were to be hot potatoes for supper; and the Elder Mother nodded from her tree, and cried 'Hurrah' with the rest of them."

"But this is no story," said the little boy who heard it told.

"So you think," said the old man, "but let us ask the Elder Mother about it."

"It is no story," said the Elder Mother, "but now the story is coming. The strangest tales often have a foundation of truth, or else how should my beautiful elder bush have sprouted out of a teapot?" And then she took the little boy out of his bed, and laid him on her bosom, while the blossoming branches of the elder tree closed over them, so that they seemed to be sitting in the thickest arbour, which flew with them through the air—and beautiful indeed it was! The Elder Mother now suddenly became an elegant girl, though her dress still remained of the same green stuff flowered with white, such as was worn by the Elder Mother. On her breast she wore a real elder flower, and a wreath of elder flowers was wound round her yellow, curly hair. And her eyes were so large and so blue—oh, she was lovely to look upon! And she and the little boy kissed each other, and they were now of the same age, and could enjoy the same amusements.

They left the arbour hand-in-hand, and found themselves in the flower-garden at home. Papa's stick was tied to a stake near the green lawn. There was life in the stick for the little ones; for no sooner did they sit a cock-horse upon it, than its shining knob changed to a pretty, neighing head, with a flowing black mane, and four slim but strong legs sprouted out. The animal was vigorous and spirited, and galloped round the lawn with them. "Hurrah! now let's ride many miles away," said the boy; "let's ride to the lord of the manor's estate, where we went last year." And they rode round the lawn, while the little girl, whom we know to be no other than the Elder Mother, kept

calling out: "Now we're in the country. Do you see yonder cottage, with an oven that sticks out of the wall like a giant egg? An elder tree rears its branches above it, and the cock is busy scratching for the chickens. Look how he struts! Now



THE WALKING-STICK BECOMES A HORSE

we are near the church; it stands high on the hill, under a large oak, one-half of which is withered. Now we are passing by the smithy, while the fire is roaring, and the half-naked men are striking with their hammers till the sparks fly about in all

directions. Away! away! till we reach his lordship's estate." And all that the little girl talked about, as she sat behind on the stick, kept flying past, and the boy saw it, though they did not stir from the lawn. They next played in the by-paths, and raked up the soil to make a little garden; and she took elder flowers out of her hair, and planted them, and they grew just as those planted by the old folks when they were young did formerly, as has been told. They went hand-in-hand, too, just like the old couple when they were children; but not up to the round tower, nor to Friedrichsberg garden. No; instead of that, the little girl held the boy round the waist, and they flew about all over the land. It was alternately spring, summer, autumn, and winter; and a thousand images floated before the boy's eyes and were engraved on his heart, while the little girl kept singing to him: "You will never forget this." And during their whole flight, the elder tree gave out the sweetest fragrance. He perceived roses and the fresh beeches, but the elder tree had a far stronger perfume, for its flowers lay near the little girl's heart, against which he frequently leaned his head during their flight.

"It is charming here in the spring," said the little girl, as they stood in the budding beech grove, where the lily-of-the-valley perfumed the ground they trod upon, and the pale red anemone looked lovely amidst the green grass. Oh, could it but be spring for ever in the fragrant Danish beech woods!

"It is delightful here in the summer," said she; and they passed by the old castles on the lord's estate, and saw their high walls and pointed gable-ends mirrored in the canals, where swans were sailing about, and peeping at the cool avenues of venerable trees. In the fields, the corn was waving like the ebb and flow of a lake; red and yellow flowers were growing in the ditches,

and wild hops and bindweed in the hedges. Towards evening the full moon looked red, and the haycocks in the meadow yielded the sweetest smell. Such a scene could never be forgotten.

"It is lovely here in autumn!" said the little girl; and the atmosphere looked doubly blue and lofty, while the forest was clothed in beautiful hues of red, yellow, and green. The hounds were off to the chase, and whole flocks of wild birds flew screeching across the fairy mounts, where the blackberry bushes were twining round the old stones. The sea looked dark blue, and was dotted with white sails; on the barn-floor sat old women, young maidens, and children, picking hops into a large vat. The young ones were singing songs, and the old ones were telling stories of gnomes and magicians. No place on earth could be pleasanter.

"It is beautiful here in winter!" said the little girl; and all the trees were covered with hoar-frost, so that they looked like white coral; the snow crackled under one's feet, as if one had new boots on; and one falling star after another kept darting across the sky. The Christmas Tree was lighted up in the warm room, and there were presents given and great festivities held; in the country the fiddles sounded under the peasant's roof, apples were cut up into quarters; and even the poorest child said: "It is really beautiful in winter!"

And beautiful indeed were all the things the little girl showed the boy: while the blossoms on the tree kept giving out their fragrance, and the red flag with the white cross, under which the old seaman had sailed, was waving in the breeze. The boy became a youth, and he had to go forth into the wide world, towards the warm climates where coffee grows. But on



"IT IS BEAUTIFUL HERE IN WINTER!"

taking leave of him, the little girl took one of the elder blossoms from the nosegay on her bosom, and gave it him as a keepsake; and he laid it in his hymn-book, and whenever he opened it in foreign lands, it was always at the page where the flowery token was placed; and the more he looked at it the fresher it grew, so that he could even inhale the fragrance of a Danish forest, and he plainly saw the little girl peeping through the leaves of the flowers with her clear, blue eyes, and whispering: "It is beautiful here in spring, in autumn, and in winter!" And hundreds of visions glided through his fancy.

Many years passed by, and he was now an old man, and sat beside his wife under an elder tree in bloom, and they were holding each other's hands, just as the great-grandfather and great-grandmother had done before them, and talking, like them, of old times and of their golden wedding. The little girl with the blue eyes and the wreath of elder flowers in her hair, sat up in the tree and nodded to them both, saying: "To-day is the golden wedding-day." And then she took a couple of flowers from her wreath and kissed them, and they shone first like silver and then like gold; and as she placed them on the heads of the old folks, each flower became a golden crown. And there they sat like a king and queen, under the fragrant tree, that looked quite like an elder tree; and he related to his old wife the story of the Elder Mother, just as he had heard it told when he was a little boy; and they both fancied that it contained much that was like their own story, and those passages pleased them best.

"Yes, so it is," said the little girl in the tree. "Some call me the Elder Mother, others a Dryad, but properly speaking, my name is Memory. It is I who sit in the tree as it grows and

grows ; I can recollect the past, and I can relate many things! Let's see if you have still preserved your flower."

And the old man opened his hymn-book, and there lay the elder flower as fresh as though it had just been placed between its pages, and Memory nodded, and the two old people, with the gold crowns on their heads, sat in the red glow of the setting sun, and closed their eyes, and—and—and—ay! that was the end of the story!

The little boy lay in his bed, and did not know whether he had been dreaming or listening to a story. The teapot stood on the table, but no elder tree was growing out of it, and the old man who had told the story was just about closing the door after him.

"How pretty it was!" said the little boy. "Mother, I have been to warm countries."

"I don't doubt it," said his mother; "when one has drunk two teacups full of elder-flower tea, one may well get into warm countries." And she covered him up that he might not take cold. "You slept very comfortably while I was disputing with him whether it was a story or a legend."

"And where is the Elder Mother?" asked the boy.

"In the teapot," said the mother, "and there she may stay."

THE SHADOW.

IN tropical climates, where the sun is very powerful, people are as brown as mahogany; and in the torrid zone, the inhabitants are burnt to negroes. It was to the former class of warm latitudes that a learned man once travelled from a cold country. He fancied that he should be able to ramble about as he did at home; but he soon found the fallacy of such an idea. He was obliged to remain indoors, like all rational people, and to keep the shutters and doors closed the live-long day; so that it looked as if the whole household were asleep, or as if everybody had gone out. But the narrow street, with its tall houses, in which he dwelt, was built in such a manner that the sun shone upon it from morning till night: it was really quite unbearable! The learned man from the cold districts was young and clever. It seemed to him as if he were peeping into a glowing furnace, and this made such an impression on him that he grew thin, and even his shadow shrivelled up and became much smaller than it was at home; moreover, the sun took it away, such as it was; and it only existed in the morning and evening when the sun was low. It was quite a pleasure to look at it. No sooner was light brought into the room, than the

shadow stretched all up the wall, and even to the very ceiling, so tall did it become; for it required a good stretching to recover its strength. The learned man went out into the balcony to stretch himself; and as soon as the stars peeped forth from the clear blue sky, he felt somewhat revived. People now began to appear at all the balconies in the street—for in warm climates every window has its balcony, and fresh air one must breathe, however accustomed one may be to the mahoganizing process—so it was a very lively scene from top to bottom of the houses. Shoemakers and tailors, and all other folks of the same sort, sat out in the street below; tables and chairs were brought out, tapers were lighted, aye, by thousands, and one chatted, and another sang, while promenaders passed to and fro, carriages drove along, and mules trotted to the "tingle-lingle-ling" of the bells on their harness; and dead bodies were buried, amidst dirges, and the tolling of church-bells. Yes, indeed, it was a most busy scene down below in the street. A single house which stood right opposite the one inhabited by the foreign learned man, formed an exception to the general bustle, and was quite quiet. And yet somebody lived there, for there were flowers in the balcony, that bloomed most beautifully in the heat of the sun, which they could not have done had they not been watered; therefore somebody must water them; consequently, there must be inmates in the house. Besides, the doors were half-opened towards evening; only it was dark, at least in the front rooms; and, moreover, music might be heard coming from the interior of the house. The foreign learned man thought the music peculiarly enchanting; but it is barely possible this might be only fancy; for he thought everything most delightful in warm latitudes, if there had but been no sun. The foreigner's

landlord said he did not know who had hired the house opposite; nobody was to be seen, and as to the music, he thought it most abominably tiresome. "It is just as if some one sat practising a piece which he could not master. It is always the same piece, too. 'I shall end by conquering it,' he says, I suppose; but he will not, let him try as long as he may."

The foreigner once woke in the night. He slept with the balcony-window open, and as the wind raised the curtain, it seemed to him that a wonderful brightness was streaming from the balcony of the house opposite. All the flowers looked like flames of the most beautiful colours, and in the midst of the flowers stood a slender, lovely maiden. She, too, seemed streaming with light, and it quite dazzled his eyes; but then, to be sure, he had but just opened them, and awoke out of his sleep. He jumped out of bed at a bound, and crept softly behind the curtain; but the maiden had already disappeared, the brightness had vanished, the flowers were no longer flaming, though they stood there as beautiful as ever. The balcony window was ajar, and from the inside of the house was wafted the sound of music, so exquisite that it might have lapped one in Elysian dreams. It was like magic. Who could live there? Where was the real entrance to the dwelling?—for, both in the main street and in the side lane, the whole ground-floor was a series of shops, and the people could not always come out and in through them.

One evening, the stranger sat in his balcony: a light was burning in the room, just behind him; and it was, therefore, quite natural that his shadow should fall on the opposite house; so, as he sat amongst the flowers on his balcony, every time he moved, his shadow moved likewise.

"I verily think my shadow is the only live thing that is to

be seen in the house opposite," said the learned man. "See how prettily it sits there between the flowers. The door is only ajar, therefore the shadow ought to be clever enough to step in, look about him, and then come back and tell me what he has seen Aye, then you would be of some use," added he in joke. "Be so good as to step in, now, will you?" And then he nodded to the shadow, and the shadow nodded in return. "Now, go; only don't stay away for good." And the foreigner rose, and the shadow on the balcony opposite rose likewise; and the foreigner turned round, and the shadow turned round also; and had anybody observed it, he might have plainly seen the shadow going in through the half-open window of the balcony of the opposite house, at the very same moment that the foreigner returned to his room, and drew the long curtain over the casement.

On the following morning, the learned man went out to drink coffee and to read the newspapers. "How is this?" said he, when he stood in the sunshine: "I have lost my shadow! It seems that he really went away yesterday evening, and has not returned. This a sad thing."

And it vexed him sorely, not so much that the shadow was gone, as because he knew that there was a story of a man without a shadow, and everybody in his country knew this story; so that, when he should return home, and relate his own adventure, people would say he was only mimicking the original story; and there was no need for him to have such things said of him. So he determined not to speak of it, and a sensible resolution it was.

In the evening, he again went out upon his balcony, having previously taken care to place the light behind him, for he knew that a shadow will always have his master to screen him: but he could not entice him out. He made himself little, and then tall;

still, no shadow was there, and no shadow would come. He cried: "Hem! ahem!"—but that was of no use.

It was distressing enough; but in tropical climates everything grows so fast, that in the course of a week he perceived, to his great joy, that a new shadow had sprouted out of his legs, when he stood in the sunshine; so he felt satisfied that the root had remained. In the course of three weeks he had a very respectable shadow, which continued growing, on his voyage back to the northern latitudes; so that it became at last so tall and so stout, that he might very well have parted with half of it.

On his return home, the learned man wrote books about all that is good, and true, and beautiful in this world; and days flew past, and years went by—many years, indeed, rolled over his head.

One evening, as he sat in his study, a slight tap was heard at the door. "Come in," said he; but no one came. So he opened the door, and there stood before him a person of such extraordinary thinness, that he felt a strange sensation creep over him. In other respects the stranger was very elegantly dressed, and seemed to be a very gentlemanly person.

"Whom have I the honour of addressing?" said our bookworm.

"Aye, I thought you would not recognize me," said the gentlemanly stranger. "I have become so corporeal that I have actually acquired flesh and clothes. You never thought to see me in such a condition. Do you not know your old shadow? Aye, you never believed that I should return. I have been extremely lucky since I was last with you: I have become very wealthy in every respect; and if I had a mind to purchase my freedom from service, I have ample means at my disposal to do

so." And he rattled a number of costly trinkets hanging to his watch, and fingered a thick gold chain that he wore round his neck; besides which, diamond rings sparkled on all his fingers. and none of it was mock jewellery.

"No, I cannot recover from my surprise," said the learned man. "What does it all mean?"

"Something rather out of the common way, to be sure," said the shadow. "But you are not an every-day sort of a man yourself; and you know I have trodden in your footsteps ever since your childhood. As soon as you found that I was old enough to make my way in the world alone, you let me follow my own devices, and I am now in the most brilliant circumstances; only I had a kind of hankering to see you once more before you die, and I wished to see this place again, because one has always a sneaking kindness for one's native country. I know that you have got another shadow—now, do I owe either you or him any money? Do but have the goodness to tell me."

"No—is it really you?" said the learned man. "This is a most remarkable occurrence. I never thought that one could see one's old shadow become a human being."

"Only tell me what I owe you," said the shadow; "for I don't like to remain in anybody's debt."

"How can you talk so?" said the learned man. "What can you possibly owe me? You are as free as anybody else. I rejoice extremely at your good fortune. Sit down, my old friend, and pray tell me how it all happened, and what you saw in the house opposite mine, in the tropical land yonder."

"Yes, I will tell you," said the shadow, sitting down; "only you must promise me, in return, that you will never tell anybody

in this city, let us meet where we may, that I have been your shadow; for I have some thoughts of marrying, having more than sufficient to support a family."

"Be easy on that score," said the learned man, "I will tell nobody who you really are. You may rely upon my promise. Here is my hand upon it, which is all-sufficient between men of honour."

"Between a man and a shadow of honour," said the shadow, correcting him.

It was really quite remarkable how much he had assumed the appearance of a man. He was dressed in a complete suit of black, of the finest cloth, patent-leather boots, and a close-folding hat, which could be pressed together so as to leave nothing visible but the top of the crown and the rim; not to speak of the watch-trinkets, the gold chain, and the diamond rings we have already mentioned. The shadow was, in fact, extremely well dressed; and it was, indeed, his clothes that made a complete man of him.

"Now I will tell you what you wish to know," said the shadow, placing his feet, with the patent-leather boots, as hard as ever he could on the arm of the learned man's new shadow, that lay at his feet like a poodle. This was either out of pride, or, perhaps, merely to enforce upon the new shadow to stick to his master. But the new shadow lay quite still, in order to listen attentively; for he, too, wished to learn how a shadow could be discharged, and grow to be his own master.

"Do you know who lived in the house opposite?" said the shadow. "It was the most delightful being in the world, namely, Poetry. I stayed there three weeks, and that was just as good as if one could live three thousand years, and read all the verse

and prose that has been written. And I may say, for it is strictly true, that I have seen everything, and that I know everything."

"Poetry!" exclaimed the learned man. "Aye, she often takes up her abode, hermit-fashion, in large towns. Poetry! Well, I saw her for one short moment, only my eyes were full of sleep. She stood on the balcony, as radiant as an Aurora-borealis, surrounded by flowers that seemed living flames. Tell me—pray, tell me: you were on the balcony, and then went through the glass-door; and what then?"

"Then I found myself in the ante-room," said the shadow. "You were still sitting and looking towards the ante-room opposite you. There was no light in it, though it was pervaded by a kind of twilight; but the doors of a whole suite of rooms stood open, and they were all lighted up. Indeed, such a mass of light would have killed me, had I penetrated as far as the presence of the maiden herself. But I was prudent, and took time, as one ought to do."

"And then what did you see?" said the learned man.

"I saw everything, as you shall hear; but—and this is really no arrogance on my part—as a free agent, and as a person possessing the extensive knowledge I am master of, to say nothing of my position in the world and my affluent circumstances, I wish you would speak a little less familiarly, and now and then remember to say 'sir.'"[1]

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the learned man. "It comes of old habit, which is not easily got rid of. You are quite right,

[1] In the original he requests him to drop the "thee" and "thou," and say "you," which being unsuitable to the English idiom, has been replaced by an equivalent.—*Translator's Note.*

and I will bear your remark in mind. But pray continue, sir, and tell me what you saw."

"Everything," said the shadow; "for I saw everything and I know everything."

"How did it look inside the rooms?" asked the learned man. "Was it like a cool grove? Or was it like a holy temple? Were the rooms like the starry sky which one sees from the top of high mountains?"

"Everything was there," said the shadow. "It is true I did not quite enter, for I remained in the twilight of the ante-room, but even there I was extremely well off. I saw everything and know everything. I have, in short, been in the waiting-room at the court of Poetry."

"Then, what did you see? Did all the gods of ancient times pass through the large rooms? Did the heroes of past ages fight there? Did lovely children play there and tell their dreams?"

"I tell you that I was there, and therefore you may think that I saw everything that was to be seen. If you had gone there, you would not have remained a human being, but I became one. And I immediately learned to understand my inward essence, and my natural affinity to Poetry. It is true that I did not think much about it when I used to be with you; but you may remember that I was wonderfully large both at sunrise and sunset; that in the moonshine I was almost more visible than yourself—but I did not then understand my inward essence, whereas in the ante-room it was revealed to me, and I became a human being! I came out again in full maturity, but you had left the tropical latitudes. As a man, I felt ashamed to go about in the state I was in; I wanted boots, and clothes, and

the exterior varnish by which a man is recognized; so I went my ways—I don't mind telling you, for you won't put it into a book—I went my ways under cover of a pastry-cook's gown, beneath which I concealed myself, while the woman little dreamed what she was harbouring. It was not till evening that I ventured out. I ran about the streets in the moonshine; I drew myself up to my full height along the walls, and that tickled my vanity very agreeably; I ran up and down, peeped through the highest windows in the rooms, and through the roof; I looked into places where nobody could look, and I saw what nobody saw, and what nobody was to see. After all, the world is a bad world, and I would not be a human being were it not an established fact that they are reckoned of some importance in the scale of creation. I saw the most incredible things on the part of wives, husbands, parents, and 'sweet, incomparable children.' I saw what no mortal has the power of knowing, but what they all would delight to know—namely, evil of their neighbours. Had I written a newspaper, it would have been read with avidity; instead of that I wrote straight to the persons themselves, and there arose a general panic in all the towns I visited. They were so afraid of me, and they loved me so dearly! The professor made a professor of me; the tailor gave me new clothes (my wardrobe is amply supplied); the overseer of the mint struck coins for me; the women said I was handsome: and so I became the man I now am. And now I must bid you adieu. Here is my card; I live on the sunny side of the street, and am always at home in rainy weather." And thereupon the shadow went away.

"It is very remarkable!" said the learned man.

Days and years flew by, when the shadow returned once more.

"How are you?" said he.

"Alas!" said the learned man, "I write about the true, the good, and the beautiful, but nobody cares to hear anything about such topics. I am quite in despair, for I take it to heart."

"That is what I never do," said the shadow. "I grow stout and fat, and everybody should endeavour to do the same. You do not understand the world; you will grow ill at this rate —you ought to travel. I am going a journey in the summer; will you accompany me? I should like to have a travelling companion; will you come with me as my shadow? It would afford me great pleasure. I will pay your travelling expenses."

"Are you going far?" asked the learned man.

"That's according as people reckon," said the shadow. "A journey will do you good. If you choose to be my shadow, your travelling expenses shall be defrayed."

"This is too absurd," said the learned man.

"But it is the way of the world," said the shadow, "and so it will remain," and away he went.

Matters went badly with the learned man. Care and sorrow pursued him, and all that he said about the true, the good, and the beautiful was *caviare* to the multitude, or, to speak more familiarly, pearls before swine. He at length fell ill.

"You really look like a mere shadow," people would say to him; when a cold shudder would creep over the learned man for he had his own thoughts on the subject.

"You must go to some watering-place," said the shadow, who came to pay him a visit. "There is no other chance for you. I will take you with me, for the sake of old acquaintance. I will pay for your journey, and you can make a description of it, which will serve to entertain me on the road. I want to visit a watering-

place, for my beard does not grow as it ought; that is a sort of illness too, and a beard I must have. Now do be rational, and accept my offer, and we will travel like friends."

And so they started on a journey. The shadow was now master, while the master had turned shadow. They drove with one another, they rode and walked together, both side by side or before and behind one another, just as the sun happened to stand. The shadow always managed to take the precedence, but the learned man was not wounded at his doing so, for he had a very good heart, and was extremely mild and of a friendly disposition. So one day the master said to the shadow: "As we have now become fellow-travellers, and have grown up together from our childhood, shall we not drink to our good-fellowship? Would it not be more friendly to call each other by our names?"

"What you say," replied the shadow, who was now really the master, "was spoken in a very well-meaning and straightforward intention; I will, therefore, reply in exactly the same spirit. You, who are a learned man, must be well aware how capricious is human nature. There are persons who cannot bear to smell brown paper, for it makes them unwell; others experience a sensation through their very marrow, if a nail is scratched along a pane of glass: now, for my part, I experience a similar sensation at any familiarity on your part; I feel myself, as it were, crushed to the earth, as I was in my former position relative to yourself. You may perceive it is a matter of feeling and not of pride. But, though I cannot tolerate any familiarity on your part, I will most willingly call you by your Christian name, and then half of your wish will, at least, be fulfilled."

And so the shadow called his former master by his name.



"I DREW MYSELF UP TO MY FULL HEIGHT ALONG THE WALLS," SAID THE SHADOW

"It is rather too bad," thought the latter, "that I must call him 'sir,' while he addresses me by my name,"—still he was obliged to put up with it.

They arrived in a watering-place where there were many foreigners, and amongst others, the daughter of a king, a most beautiful creature, who had the disease of being too sharp-sighted, which was very alarming.

She immediately perceived that the newly-arrived stranger was quite a different person to everybody else. "They say that he is come here to get his beard to grow, but I can perceive that the real reason is, that he is unable to cast a shadow."

She now became curious about the matter, and therefore, while on the promenade one day, she entered into conversation with the foreign gentleman. Being a king's daughter, she was not obliged to stand upon ceremony, and therefore said bluntly to him: "Your disease is, that you cannot cast a shadow."

"Your royal highness must be on the high way to your recovery," said the shadow. "I know that your complaint consists of being too sharp-sighted; but you have now seemingly got over it completely: I happen to have a most unusual shadow. Do you not see the person who is always by my side? Other people have an ordinary sort of shadow, but I cannot endure common-place things. Persons often give their servants finer cloth for their liveries than they make use of for their own wear, and in like manner I have been pleased to trick out my shadow like a man—nay, you may perceive that I have even furnished him with a shadow, which is rather an expensive whim, only I like to have something out of the way belonging to me."

"Can it be possible," thought the princess, "that I should have recovered? This watering-place must be the best in the

world ; water has wonderful properties in our times. But I will not yet leave the place, because it now begins to be very entertaining ; this foreign prince—for prince he must be—pleases me exceedingly. It is to be hoped his beard won't grow, for then he would be off directly."

In the evening, the king's daughter and the shadow danced together in the large assembly-room. She was light, but he was lighter still—she had never seen such a dancer before. She told him from what country she came, and he knew the country ; he had been there when she was not at home, and had peeped through the palace windows both below and above ; he had heard this, that, and the other, and could therefore answer the king's daughter, and make allusions that astonished her exceedingly. He must, she thought, be the most learned man on earth, and she felt the greatest respect for his knowledge. And when she danced with him again, she fell in love with him—a fact which the shadow was not behindhand in perceiving, for her eyes nearly looked him through. She danced with him a third time, and was on the point of telling him what she felt, but being prudent, she thought of her country and her kingdom, and of the many people over whom she would one day reign. "He is a clever man," said she to herself, "and that is all well and good ; and he dances admirably, which is well and good likewise—but query, has he any solid knowledge? That is an important consideration, and I must put him to the test."

And so she immediately asked him a most knotty question, which she herself would not have been able to solve, when the shadow made a very odd face.

"You will not be able to answer that," said the king's daughter.

"I should have been able to do so in my childhood," said the shadow, "and I fancy that even my shadow, who is standing there near the door, would be able to answer your question."

"Your shadow?" said the king's daughter; "that would be remarkable indeed."

"I do not positively say that he can," observed the shadow, "but I should think so. He has followed me so many years, and has heard so much from me, that I should believe he could. But your royal highness must allow me to observe that he is so proud of being taken for a human being, that if one wants him to be in a good humour—and that he must be, in order to answer properly—he should be treated like a real man."

"I like his spirit," said the king's daughter; and going up to the learned man, who stood near the door, she talked with him about the sun and the moon, the green forests, the inhabitants of the earth, both far and near, on all of which topics the learned man answered with sense and judgment.

"What a man must he be, who can have so wise and learned a shadow!" thought she. "It would be a blessing for my people and my nation if I chose such a one—so choose him I will."

And the king's daughter and the shadow were soon agreed, but she wished nobody to be informed of their engagement until she had returned to her kingdom.

"Not a soul shall hear of it—not even my shadow!" said the shadow, and he had particular reasons for saying so.

They now reached the land where the king's daughter reigned when she was at home.

"I say, friend," quoth the shadow to the learned man, "now that I am as happy and as influential as anybody can be, I will

do something out of the usual way for you. You shall live with me in the palace, and shall drive out with me in the royal carriage, and receive a yearly salary of a hundred thousand rix-dollars; only you must let yourself be styled a shadow before everybody, and must never betray that you ever were a man; and once a year, when I sit in the balcony in the sunshine, and show myself, you must crouch at my feet as becomes a shadow. For I may now inform you that I am about to marry the king's daughter, and that our wedding will take place this evening."

"No, this is carrying absurdity rather too far," said the learned man. "I cannot and will not submit to it. Why, it would be nothing less than deceiving the whole nation, and the king's daughter into the bargain. I shall reveal the whole truth, and say that I am a man and that you are a shadow, only dressed up in man's clothes."

"Not a soul would believe you," said the shadow. "Be reasonable, or I shall summon the guard."

"I will go straight to the king's daughter," said the learned man.

"But I shall go first," said the shadow, "and you, my fine fellow, shall go into prison." And this was no sooner said than done, for the guards obeyed him whom they knew the king's daughter was about to marry.

"You seem to be trembling," said the king's daughter, when the shadow entered her room. "Has anything happened? You must not be ill to-day, just when we are going to celebrate our wedding."

"I have gone through the most dreadful scene that can be imagined," said the shadow. "Only think!—I suppose a shadow's poor brain cannot endure much—only think! my shadow is gone

mad ; he fancies that he has become a man, and that I—only think !—that I am his shadow ! "

" This is shocking," said the princess ; " but has he been shut up ? "

" Of course ; and I am sadly afraid he will never recover."

" Poor shadow ! " said the princess, " he is most unfortunate It would really be a charity to deliver him from his little bit of an existence ; and when I come to think how apt the people are in our days to take part with little folks against great folks, it seems to me it would be a politic measure to get rid of him quietly."

" It is a hard case, for he was a faithful servant," said the shadow, pretending to sigh.

" You are a noble character ! " said the princess, bowing to him.

In the evening the whole town was illuminated, and cannons were fired—boom !—and soldiers presented arms. It was a very grand wedding ! The king's daughter and the shadow stepped into the balcony to show themselves to the people, and to obtain one cheer more.

But the learned man heard nothing of all these festivities, for he had already been executed.



LITTLE TOTTY.

THERE once lived a woman who wished for a very little child, but she did not know where to find one. So she went to an old witch, and said: "I should so like to have a little child; can you tell me what I shall do to find one?"

"Oh, that's easy enough," said the witch. "Here is a barley-corn that is not of the same sort as those which grow in country fields, or which chickens feed upon. Place it in a flower-pot, and you'll see something wonderful."

"I am much obliged to you," said the woman, giving the witch twelve shillings, for that was the price agreed upon. She then went home and planted the barley-corn, when there immediately grew up a beautiful large flower, that looked like a tulip, only the leaves were closed, just as if it were still in the bud.

"This flower is indeed wondrously beautiful!" cried the woman, kissing its red and yellow leaves; and just as she kissed it, the flower opened with a loud noise. It was a real tulip, as might now be seen, but in the midst of the flower, a tiny girl, of the most delicate and exquisite shape, sat on the green pistil. She was scarcely as tall as half one's thumb, and she was therefore called little Totty, as expressive of her diminutive size.



TOTTY FOUND IN THE TULIP

An elegant lacquered walnut-shell served as her cradle; her mattresses consisted of blue violet leaves, and a rose-leaf served as her counterpane. Here she slept all night, but in the day-time she played about on the table, where the woman had placed a plate, edged all round by a wreath of flowers, whose stems stood in water. A large tulip-leaf lay in the water, and this served Totty as a boat, which she rowed from one side of



TOTTY CARRIED OFF BY THE TOAD

the plate to the other; the oars she used were a couple of white horse-hairs. It was a pretty sight to see! And she could sing, too, so sweetly, that the like had never been heard before.

One night, as she lay in her pretty bed, a nasty toad jumped in through a broken pane in the window. The toad was very large, ugly, and wet. She leaped right on to the table where ittle Totty lay asleep, under her red rose-leaf counterpane.

"She would be a nice wife for my son," said the toad; and she picked up the walnut-shell, with Totty asleep in it, and jumped through the window, cradle and all, down into the garden.

A large rivulet flowed through the garden, but the banks were swampy, like a marsh; and here the toad lived with her son, who was every inch as ugly and as nasty as his mother. "Croak! croak! croak!" was all he could say, when he saw the elegant little maid in her walnut-shell.

"Don't speak so loud, or you'll wake her," said the old toad. "and then she might escape from us, for she is as light as swan's-down. We will set her on one of the broad leaves of yonder water-lily in the midst of the brook; it will be like an island to her who is so light and so small. And then she won't be able to run away, while we are preparing the state apartments down under the marsh, where you will live when you are married."

There were a number of water-lilies in the brook, with broad, green leaves, that seemed to be swimming on the surface of the water; the furthest of these leaves happened to be the largest, and thither did the toad swim, and place the walnut-shell containing little Totty.

The tiny, tiny being awoke early in the morning, and began to cry bitterly on finding the place she was in; for the leaf was surrounded on all sides by water, and she was wholly unable to reach land.

The old toad, meantime, was below-stairs in the swamp, busy decorating the room with reeds and sedges, to make it look smart for the reception of her new daughter-in-law; and when her work was finished, she swam over with her son to the leaf where Totty had been placed, to fetch away her pretty

bedstead, that was to be placed in the bridal-chamber ready for her. The old toad bowed to her in the water, and said, "This is my son, who is to be your husband; and you'll live very handsomely down in the marsh."

"Croak! croak! croak!" was all that the son could add to his mother's eloquence.

They then took up the elegant little bed, and swam away



THE FISHES TAKE PITY ON TOTTY

while Totty sat alone on the green leaf, and wept, for she did not like the thought of living with the nasty toad, and still less of marrying her ugly son. The little fishes who were disporting below in the water had seen the toad, and heard, too, what she said; so they now popped their heads out to see the little girl themselves. They had no sooner caught sight of her, than they

thought her so pretty, that they felt quite sorry she should be condemned to live below amongst the toads. It must not be, they all agreed. So they gathered round the green stalk in the water below, that kept the leaf fast, and gnawed it off at the root with their teeth, when the leaf floated down the stream, carrying little Totty far beyond the reach of the toad.

Totty sailed past many towns, and the little birds in the bushes saw her and sang, "What a lovely little creature!" And the leaf swam and swam till little Totty was travelling far away.

An elegant small white butterfly fluttered about her continually, and at last alighted on the leaf. Totty pleased him, and she was glad of it; for now the toad could not possibly reach her, and the country she was sailing through was so beautiful! The sun, too, was shining on the waters, and making them sparkle like liquid gold. She took off her sash and tied one end round the butterfly, while she fastened the other end to the leaf, which now glided on much faster, and she with it, as she stood upon its surface.

A large cockchafer, who happened to pass, no sooner saw her than he pounced upon her delicate form with his claws, and flew away with her to a tree. The green leaf floated down the stream, and the butterfly with it, for he was bound fast to the leaf, and could not disentangle himself.

Oh, how frightened was poor Totty, when the cockchafer flew off with her to the tree. But she was principally grieved on account of the white butterfly, whom she had fastened to the leaf, and who would die of hunger if unable to loosen his bonds. But the cockchafer did not trouble himself about that. He sat down by her side on the largest green leaf of the tree, gave her some honey from the flowers to eat, and told her she was very

pretty, though so unlike a cockchafer. After a while, all the cockchafers that inhabited the tree came to pay them a visit. After staring at Totty, the cockchafer misses turned up their feelers contemptuously, saying, "She has only two legs—how pitiful, to be sure!" "She has no feelers," observed another. "She is so slim in the waist—faugh! she is like a human being! How ugly she is!" said all the female cockchafers, although Totty was so remarkably pretty. The cockchafer who had run away with her, had at first appreciated her beauty, but when all his female friends pronounced her to be ugly, he finished by thinking so, and declared he would not have her, and that she might go wherever she liked. So they now flew down from the tree with her, and placed her upon a daisy, and there she sat and wept at thinking how ugly she must be, since even the cockchafers would not admit her amongst them; and yet she was the loveliest creature that can be imagined, as delicate and tender as the sweetest rose-leaf.

Poor little Totty lived through the whole summer all alone in the wide forest. She wove some blades of grass into a kind of matting to serve for a hammock, and she hung it up under a leaf of clover to protect her from the rain; she gathered sweets from the flowers for her nourishment; and drank of the dew that stood on the leaves every morning. Thus summer and autumn passed by pleasantly enough; but now came winter—cold, dreary winter! All the birds that had sung to her so sweetly now flew away; the trees and flowers had withered; the large leaf of clover under which she had lived had now rolled itself up like an awning that is put by, and nothing remained but a yellow, withered stalk: she felt dreadfully cold, for her clothes were in tatters, and so small and so delicate as

poor Totty was, there seemed no chance for her to escape being frozen to death. It now began to snow, and every flake that fell upon her was as bad as a shovelful would be to us, because we are of the natural size, and she was only an inch high. She then wrapped herself up in a dry leaf, but it cracked in the middle, and could not keep her warm; so she kept shivering with cold.



IN THE FIELD-MOUSE'S HOME

Near the forest where she had taken up her summer quarters lay a large corn-field; only the corn had long since been removed, and nothing remained but the bare, dry stubble that stood in rows in the frozen soil. It was like crossing a huge forest for her to wander through one of these, and she trembled with cold from head to foot. At last, however, she reached the

door of a field-mouse, who had burrowed her dwelling under the stubble. There the field-mouse lived snugly and securely enough, and had a whole roomful of corn, an excellent kitchen, and a dining-room. Poor little Totty stood before the door, like a poor beggar girl, and begged for a little bit of barleycorn; for she had eaten nothing whatever for the two last days.

"You poor little animal!" said the field-mouse, for she was a good old field-mouse in the main, "come into my warm room, and dine with me."

As Totty pleased her she said: "You are welcome to stay all the winter with me, only you must keep my room clean and tidy, and tell me stories, for I am very fond of hearing them." And Totty did what the good old field-mouse required, and a very comfortable time she had of it.

"We shall soon have a visitor coming to see us," said the field-mouse; "I have a neighbour who calls on me once a week. He is still better off than I am, for he has large rooms, and wears a handsome black fur pelisse. If you could have him for a husband, you would be well provided for indeed. Only he can't see at all. You must mind and tell him some of your best stories."

But Totty did not care anything about him; for the field-mouse's neighbour was a mole.

At length he came in his black fur pelisse and paid his visit. Dame field-mouse said he was very rich and very learned, and that his dwelling was above twenty times larger than hers. He might possess some learning, but he could not bear either the sun or the beautiful flowers, and he always spoke slightingly of both, just because he had never seen them.

Totty was obliged to sing, and so she sang: "Ladybird,

ladybird, fly away home," besides other songs. And the mole fell in love with her on account of her sweet voice; but he said nothing, because he was a very wary mole.

A short time since, he had burrowed a long underground passage leading from his house to the field-mouse's dwelling; and both the mouse and Totty were now free to walk in it as often as they liked. But he warned them not to be frightened at a dead bird that was lying in the passage. It was a complete bird with beak and feathers, apparently only just dead, and who was now buried on the spot where the mole had made his vault.

The mole held in his mouth a piece of phosphorescent wood, that shines like fire in the dark, and went before to light them through the long, gloomy passage. When they came to the spot where lay the dead bird, the mole bored a hole through the ceiling with his broad nose, so that the earth gave way, and the light could come through. On the ground lay a dead swallow, with his pretty wings pressed close to his sides, and his feet and head drawn up under the feathers; the poor bird had evidently died of cold. Little Totty was moved to pity, for she was so fond of all little birds, for they had sung and twitted to her so sweetly all the summer! But the mole only pushed the dead bird aside with his short legs, unfeelingly observing: "He will not sing any more! What a miserable fate it must be to be born a little bird! Thank heaven! none of my children will be so badly off as that! For a bird who can do nothing but say 'twit! twit!' must needs starve in winter."

"You speak very rationally," said the field-mouse. "What, indeed, does a bird get for all his twit-twitting, when the

winter sets in? He must starve and get frozen. But, I suppose, that is vastly genteel."

Little Totty said nothing; but when the two others had turned their backs, she stooped down to the dead bird, and stroking aside the feathers that covered his head, she kissed his closed eyes. "Perhaps it was he who sang so sweetly to me in summer," thought she; "and how he used to delight me, dear pretty bird that he was!"

The mole now stopped up once more the hole through which he had entered, and then accompanied the ladies home. But Totty could not sleep that night; so she got up, and wove a nice, large carpet, out of some hay, which she went and spread over the dead bird, and then, having found in the field-mouse's room some down plucked from flowers, and as soft as cotton, she laid it on each side of the bird, that he might lie warmly in the cold earth.

"Farewell, you pretty bird," said she, "farewell; and take my thanks for your pretty singing throughout the summer, when the trees were green, and the warm sun shone down upon us." She then laid her head on the bird's breast; but immediately she was startled, for it felt as if something went thump! thump! inside. This was the bird's heart; for the bird was not dead, he had only been senseless; and now that he was warmed, he began to revive.

In autumn all the swallows fly away to warm countries; but if one of them happens to be belated, it generally becomes frozen, and drops down as if dead, and remains lying wherever it happens to fall—and the cold snow then covers it over.

Totty trembled with fright, for the bird was very, very big compared to herself, who was only an inch high. Still, she took

courage, and laying the cotton more thickly round the poor swallow, she fetched a leaf of curled mint, that served for her counterpane, and spread it over the bird's head.

In the following night she again stole to see him, when she found him alive, but very faint. He could only just open his eyes for a moment, to look at Totty, as she stood before him with a piece of phosphorescent wood in her hand—for this was the only lantern she could command.

"Thank you, my pretty little maiden," said the sick swallow; "I am nicely warmed now, and I shall soon get my strength again, and be able to fly abroad in the warm sunshine."

"Oh!" cried she; "but it is cold out of doors, for it snows and freezes. Keep in your warm bed, and I'll take care of you."

She then brought the swallow some water in the leaf of a flower, and after he had drunk, he told her how he had torn his wing on a bramble-bush, and had, therefore, not been able to fly as fast as the other swallows, who had flown far away to warmer lands. So, at last, he fell to the ground, but could not recollect what happened afterwards, nor how he came there.

The swallow remained below during the whole winter; and Totty nursed him carefully, and was very fond of him; but neither the mole nor the field-mouse knew anything about it, for they could not bear swallows.

As soon as spring returned, and the sun began to warm the earth, the swallow bade Totty farewell; and she opened the hole the mole had once made in the ceiling to let him out. The sun shone upon them so brightly, and the swallow asked her if she would go with him, as she could sit on his back, and they might fly far away into the green forest. But Totty knew it

would vex the old field-mouse if she were to leave her in that manner.

"No, I cannot," said little Totty.

"Farewell! farewell! you kind and pretty girl," said the swallow, flying out into the broad sunshine. Totty looked after him, and tears rose to her eyes, for she had a kindly feeling for the poor swallow.

"Twit! twit!" sang the bird, as he flew about in the green woods. Little Totty was very sad. She was not allowed to go out into the warm sunshine. The corn, which had been sown in the field over the field-mouse's dwelling, had now grown to be tall, and formed quite a thick forest for the poor little maiden, who was only an inch high.

"You are going to be married, little Totty," said the field-mouse. "My neighbour has asked for your hand. Only think what a piece of luck for a poor girl! Now you must set about making your wedding outfit; both woollen and linen clothes shall you have, for you must not be short of anything when you are the mole's wife."

So Totty was obliged to spin away; and the field-mouse hired four spiders, to weave for her day and night. The mole came to see her every evening; and was always observing, that when the summer would be over the sun would lose its warmth, and that at present it burnt the ground, and made it as hard as a stone. And when the summer was but over, then his wedding with Totty should take place. But she was not pleased, for she could not bear the tiresome mole. Every morning at sunrise, and every evening at sunset, did she steal out to the door; and when the wind blew the ears of corn aside, so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how bright and beautiful it was abroad,

and longed to see her dear swallow again. But he would never come again; for he had assuredly flown away to the lovely green forest.



TOTTY SAYS GOOD-BYE TO THE SUN

By the time it was autumn, Totty's outfit was quite ready. "In four weeks' time the wedding shall take place," said the

field-mouse to her. But Totty wept, and said she would not have the tiresome mole.

"Twiddle-twaddle!" quoth the field-mouse. "Don't be obstinate, or I shall bite you with my white teeth! He is a very well-favoured mole. The queen herself has not such a fine black fur pelisse. His kitchen and cellar are full. So thank Providence for what is sent you!"

So the wedding was to take place. The mole had already come to fetch Totty, and she was to live with him deep underground, and never to come out to greet the warm sun, because he could not bear it. The poor girl was so sad to think she must bid farewell to the beautiful sun, which she had at least been allowed to look at from the door, when she lived with the field-mouse.

"Farewell, bright sun!" said she, stretching out her arms, and going a few steps away from the field-mouse's dwelling,—for the harvest was now over, and nothing was left but the dry stubble. "Farewell! farewell!" she said, flinging her arms round a little red flower that stood near. "Greet the little swallow in my name, if you should happen to see him."

"Twit! twit!" she heard above her head; and looking up, she saw it was the swallow himself, who was just passing by. As soon as he spied Totty, he was much pleased; and she told him how she disliked the idea of marrying the ugly mole, as she must then live deep below in the earth, where the sun never shone. Nor could she help crying as she spoke.

"The cold winter is coming on," said the little swallow; "I am going to fly to warmer lands; will you come with me? You can sit on my back. Bind yourself on securely with your sash, and then we will fly away from the ugly mole and his gloomy

abode,—far, far away, over the mountains, till we reach the warm climates, where the sun shines far brighter than here, where the summer is eternal, and where grow the fairest flowers. Only fly with me, you dear little Totty, who saved my life when I lay frozen in that dreary cellar."

"Yes, I will go with you," said little Totty; and she placed herself on the bird's back, with her feet resting on his spread wings, and fastened her sash to one of the strongest feathers; and then the swallow flew up high into the air, over both forest and sea, high above the highest snow-capped mountains. And little Totty would have frozen in the cold air, had she not crept under the bird's warm feathers, only leaving her little head free to admire the beautiful landscape below.

At length they reached the warm lands, where the sun shone far brighter than before, the sky seemed twice as high from the earth, and the finest black and white grapes grew on the hedges and in the ditches; while in the woods hung lemons and china oranges. There was a sweet perfume of myrtles and balm-mint; and along the roads were lovely children running, playing with large parti-coloured butterflies. But the swallow flew still further, till the landscape became more and more beautiful, and they reached a palace of dazzling white marble, built in ancient times, on the borders of a blue lake, and overshaded by the most splendid green trees. Vines were climbing up its tall pillars, and quite at the top might be seen a number of swallows' nests, in one of which lived the swallow that was carrying Totty.

"This is my house," said the swallow; "but it would not do for you to live with me—I have not such accommodation as would suit you. So now look out for one of the prettiest flowers



THEREFORE HE TOOK HIS GOLD CROWN OFF HIS HEAD AND PLACED IT ON HERS

amongst those blooming below there, and I will set you upon it, and you shall be as happy as you can wish."

"This is delightful!" cried she, clapping her little hands.

A large white marble pillar lay broken into three pieces upon the ground, and between each of these clefts grew the most beautiful white flowers. The swallow flew down with Totty, and placed her on one of the broad leaves of these flowers. But how astonished was she on perceiving a little mannikin, as white and transparent as glass, sitting in the middle of the flower. He wore the prettiest gold crown on his head, and the most delicate wings on his shoulders; and he was not larger than little Totty herself. This was the spirit of the flower. For a tiny man, or a tiny woman, dwells in every flower; but this was the king of them all.

"Oh, how beautiful he is!" whispered Totty to the swallow.

The little prince was frightened at the swallow, who was quite a giant bird to him who was so small and so delicate; but when he saw Totty he was quite charmed, for she was the prettiest girl he had ever beheld. Therefore he took his gold crown off his head and placed it on hers, and asked her name, and whether she would become his wife, and be queen over all the flowers? This indeed was a different sort of suitor to the toad's son or the mole in his fur pelisse! She therefore said "Yes," to the handsome prince's offer. Then there came forth a little lady, or a tiny gentleman, from every flower, all of them so exquisitely beautiful that it was a treat to behold them. And each brought Totty a present,—the best of all being a handsome pair of wings like those of a large white fly. These were fastened to Totty's shoulders, and then she could fly from flower to flower. So there was much rejoicing; and the little swallow,

who sat alone in his nest, was called upon to sing a wedding-song, which he performed as well as he could, though he felt rather sad at heart, as he was so fond of Totty that he would never willingly have parted from her.

"You shall no longer be called Totty," said the spirits of the flowers to her; "for that is not a pretty name, and you are so pretty. We will call you Maia."

"Farewell! farewell!" said the little swallow, with a heavy heart, on leaving the warm lands to fly back to Denmark. There he has a little nest near the window where lives the man who wrote this story. He sang "twit! twit!" to him, and that is the way we came by the whole history.



THE NAUGHTY BOY.

THERE was once an old poet, and a good old poet he was. One evening, as he sat at home, there was a tremendous storm abroad, and the rain was pouring down, while the old poet sat comfortably behind his stove, where burned a cheerful fire, in front of which some apples were hissing.

"The poor creatures who are abroad to-night will not have a dry thread upon them!" said he, for the poet was kind-hearted.

"Oh, pray open the door, for I'm half frozen, and so wet!" cried a little boy outside. He was whimpering and knocking at the door, while the rain poured down in torrents, and the wind made all the windows rattle.

"You poor little being!" said the old poet, as he went to open the door. There stood a little boy completely naked, with the water dripping down from his long flaxen ringlets. He was shivering with cold, and must have perished had he not been let in.

"You poor little being!" said the old poet, taking him by the

hand, "come to me and I will warm you. And you shall have some wine and an apple, for you are a nice boy."

And that he was. His eyes sparkled like two bright stars, and though the water dripped down from his locks, yet they were



THE BOY BEGS FOR SHELTER

still curling so prettily. He looked like a little cherub, though pale with cold, and shivering all over. In his hand he carried a handsome bow that was quite spoilt by the rain, and all the colours on his pretty arrows were daubed about by the wet.

The old poet sat down near the stove, and took the little boy on his knees, wrung the water from his locks, warmed his hands in his own, and gave him some sweet wine made hot. The boy then recovered, the bloom returned to his cheeks, and he jumped upon the floor, and frisked round the old poet.

"You seem to be a merry boy," said the old man; "what is your name?"

"My name is Love," answered he. "Do you not know me? There lies my bow; and I assure you I can shoot famously with it. Now see, the weather is once more fine out abroad, and the moon is shining."

"But your bow is spoilt," observed the old poet.

"That would be a pity," said the little boy, taking it up and examining it. "Oh, it is perfectly dry," added he, "and has taken no harm. The string is still quite tight. I'll try it." He then bent his bow, placed an arrow in it, took aim, and hit the good old poet right through the heart. "Do you see now that my bow is not spoilt?" said he, as he ran away laughing. What a naughty boy to shoot the old poet who had taken him into his warm room, and been so kind to him, and given him such nice wine and the best of apples!

The good poet lay on the floor and wept; for he had been really shot through the heart. "Fie!" cried he; "what a naughty boy this Love must be! I'll tell all good children to beware of him, and never to play with him for fear he should hurt them."

And all good children, whether girls or boys, to whom he related what had befallen him, tried to beware of naughty Love; yet he often managed to deceive them, for he is so very cunning. When the students return from a lecture, he runs beside them in a black coat, and with a book under his arm. They can't

recognize him in such a disguise, and so they take his arm, fancying him to be a student like themselves, when he runs one of his arrows through their breast. He sits in the large lustre in the theatre, and burns so steadily that people mistake him for a lamp, but they discover their error sooner or later. He runs in the parks and public promenades. Aye, reader, he once shot your parents through the heart—only ask them, and you'll hear what they say. Oh, he is a mischievous boy is this same Love! You must never have anything to do with him. He is on the watch behind everybody. Only think! He once shot an arrow at your old grandmother—but that was a long time ago. The wound is now cured, but still she will never forget it. Fie upon mischievous Love! But now you are put upon your guard, and know what a naughty boy he is.





THE BELL.

TOWARDS evening, in the narrow streets of a large town, just as the sun was sinking, and the clouds were gleaming like gold between the chimneys, a singular sound, like that of a church-bell, was often heard—sometimes by one, sometimes by another; but it only lasted a minute, for there was such a rumbling of carts, and such a din of voices, that slighter noises were drowned. "The evening bell is ringing," people used to say, "and now the sun is about to sink."

Those who rambled beyond the town, where the houses were more thinly scattered, and had gardens and little fields between them, saw the evening sky in fuller beauty, and heard the sound of the bell much more distinctly. It seemed to proceed from a church lying in the depths of the fragrant forest; and people looked in that direction, and their hearts were lifted up.

After some time had passed by, one would say to another: "I wonder whether there is a church out there in the woods? The bell has such a peculiarly fine tone. Shall we not go and listen to it a little nearer?" And the rich drove thither, and the poor went on foot, but the way seemed endlessly long. And when they had reached a grove of willows, that grew on the outskirts of the forest, they sat down to rest, and looked up at the long branches, and thought they were now in the depths of the greenwood. One of the confectioners of the town came and pitched a tent thereabouts; and then a rival confectioner came and hung a bell over his tent, and a bell that was tarred all over, too, in case of rain—only it had no clapper. Then when the folks went home, they said it was so very romantic; and that was something better than having merely taken tea. Three persons declared that they had explored to the end of the forest, and that they had always heard the same peculiar sound of a bell, only it seemed there as if it proceeded from the town. One wrote a song on the subject, and said that the bell sounded like the voice of a mother speaking to a good and beloved child, and that no melody was superior to the sound of that bell.

The emperor of the land likewise turned his attention to the matter, and held out a promise of bestowing the title of "The World's Bellringer" on whomsoever should discover whence the sound proceeded, even should there turn out to be no bell in the case.

Many now went into the forest in the hope of securing so good a provision for themselves; but only one brought back any kind of explanation of the mystery. None of them had penetrated deep enough—no more had he; still he averred that the bell-like sound proceeded from a large owl in a hollow tree.

It was, he said, a wise owl, that was continually striking its head against the tree; but whether the tone proceeded from the bird's head, or from the hollow trunk, he could not distinctly affirm. He was appointed to the office of "The World's Bellringer"; and every year he produced a small treatise upon the owl, which left everybody as wise as they were before.

A ceremony of confirmation had taken place. The preacher had held forth with heartfelt eloquence, and those who had been confirmed were deeply impressed, for it was a solemn day to them. They were lifted from childhood to the state of grown persons, and their childish spirits must now assume the attributes of rational beings. It was a fine sunny day; and as the young folks who had been confirmed went to take a walk out of town, the large unknown bell sounded from the forest, in a tone of unusual solemnity. They immediately longed to go and seek for it; and all were of the same opinion, except three. One of these, a girl, wanted to go home and fit on her ball dress; for it happened that it was the dress and the ball which had been the occasion of her being confirmed, or else she would not have been taken to the entertainment at all. The second was a poor boy, who had borrowed a coat and a pair of boots of his landlord's son, to be confirmed in, and who was obliged to return them by a certain time. While the third said that he never went to strange places unless his parents were with him; that he had always been a good boy, and that he wished to remain so, even though he had been confirmed, and that nobody ought to laugh at him,—which they nevertheless took the liberty of doing.

So these three fell off, but the others trudged onwards. The sun was shining brightly, the birds were singing, and the newly-confirmed young people held each other by the hand; as yet

none of them had entered upon any employment, and they were all equally good Christians in the eyes of the Lord.

But two of the youngest soon grew tired, and returned to town. Two little girls sat down to make garlands, and they went no further. And when the others reached the willows, where the confectioner lived, they observed: "Now we are a fair way into the forest; but the bell does not really exist, it is only a fancy that people have taken into their heads."



THE BELL SOUNDS IN THE FOREST

Just then the bell sounded so beautifully, and so solemnly, from the depths of the forest, that four or five amongst them determined to penetrate further. The trees were thickly set, and very leafy. It was really difficult to advance; for daffodils and anemones grew almost too high, while blooming creepers hung in long garlands from tree to tree, on whose boughs the nightin-

gales were singing, and the sunbeams playing. It was most lovely! But the way was really not fit for girls, who would have torn their dresses at every step. There were huge blocks of stone overgrown with variegated moss, and the fresh spring water babbled forth, and seemed to say the words "Gurgle, gurgle."

"I wonder whether this is the bell, after all?" said one of the newly-confirmed youths, as he lay down and listened. "It is worth studying closely." So he remained behind, and let the others go on.

They came to a cottage built of bark and branches. A wild apple-tree of goodly growth stretched its boughs over it, as if it would shower down blessings over its roof, which was overgrown with blooming roses. The long boughs drooped over the gable-end, to which was fastened a little bell. Might not this be the bell they heard? They all agreed it must be, except one youth, who objected that the bell was too small and too delicate to be heard at such a distance, and that it was a very different sound indeed that touched the human heart so deeply. He who spoke was a king's son; and then the others said that this sort of people always wanted to be wiser than anybody else.

Therefore they left him to go his ways; and the further he went the more deeply was he impressed by the solitude of the forest. But he still heard the little bell that the others had been so delighted with; and now and then, when the wind blew from the confectioner's, he could hear the folks singing over their tea. But the tones of the deep bell became louder and louder, and it soon seemed as if an organ had joined them; and the sound proceeded from the left—namely, from the side of the heart.

There was now a rustling amongst the bushes, and a little

boy stood before the king's son, wearing wooden shoes, and so short a jacket that one could mark the exact length of his wrists. They knew one another; the boy being one of those who had been confirmed, and who could not join the excursion, because he had to go home and deliver up the coat and boots to his landlord's son. This he had done, and had then sallied forth in his wooden shoes and his shabby clothes, for the bell sounded so loud and so solemnly, that go he must.

"We can walk together," said the king's son. But the poor newly-confirmed youth in the wooden shoes was ashamed. He pulled down the short sleeves of his jacket, and said he feared he could not walk fast enough; besides, he thought the bell must be sought on the right side, because it was in that direction that lay the finest part of the forest.

"Then we shall not be likely to meet each other," said the king's son, nodding to the poor boy, who went into the deepest depths of the forest, where the brambles tore his shabby clothes asunder, and scratched his face, hands, and feet till they bled. The king's son likewise met with some right good scratches, but the sun shone on his path, and it's he whom we shall follow, for he was a nimble lad.

"I must and will find the bell," said he, "though I were to go to the world's end to seek it!"

Some ugly apes sat on the tree-tops, and grinned till they showed all their teeth. "Shall we cudgel him?" said they. "Shall we thrash him? He is a king's son."

But he went undaunted, deeper and still deeper into the forest, where grew the strangest flowers. There stood star-like lilies, with deep red stamina; azure tulips, that sparkled in the breeze; and apple-trees, whose fruit looked like large brilliant

soap-bubbles. Only think how the trees glittered in the sunshine! Around the loveliest meadows, where the hart and the hind were playing on the grass, grew stately oaks and beech-trees; and wherever the bark had cracked in any of these trees, grass and long tendrils peeped out of the crevices. And there were large tracts of land intersected by quiet lakes, on whose surface white swans were swimming and flapping their wings.



WATCHING THE SUN SET

The king's son frequently stood still and listened. He often fancied the bell sounded in his ears from out of one of these lakes; but he knew that it could not proceed thence, and that the bell was sounding yet deeper in the forest.

The sun had now set. The air was as glowing red as fire, and the forest was as silent as silent could be, when he sank on his knees, and sang an evening hymn, and then said—

"Never shall I find what I seek! The sun is now sinking, and night, dark night, is coming on. Yet I may perhaps see the round, red sun once more before it disappears from the horizon: I will climb to the summit of yonder rocks, for their height is equal to that of the tallest tree."

And by the help of roots and creepers he managed to scale the wet rocks, where water-snakes were wriggling about, and toads seemed to be baying at him; yet he reached the summit before the sun had quite sunk to rest.

Oh, how grand a sight was there! The sea, the boundless, magnificent sea, rolling its broad waves to the shore, lay spread out before him, while the sun stood like a fiery altar just at the point where the sea and sky met, and all around had melted into one glorious tint. The forest was singing, and the sea was singing, and his heart joined their hymns of praise.

All nature was one vast, holy church, whose pillars were formed by trees and floating clouds, whose velvet hangings were represented by grass and flowers, and whose dome was imaged forth by the sky itself; but the glowing tints now faded away, and millions of stars, like so many diamond lamps, lighted up that glorious cupola. And the king's son stretched forth his arms towards heaven, towards the sea, and towards the forest.

Just at that moment, the poor boy, with the short sleeves and the wooden shoes, emerged from the right-hand road; he, too, had come just in time, having reached the same point by another way.

And they ran to meet each other, and stood hand in hand in the vast church of nature and poetry. And above them sounded the invisible, solemn bell, while holy spirits floated around them, singing a joyous hallelujah!



LITTLE KLAUS AND BIG KLAUS.

In a village there once lived two persons of the same name. Both were called Klaus; but one had four horses, while the other had only one. In order, however, to distinguish them, the one that owned the four horses was styled Big Klaus, while he who had but a single horse was called Little Klaus. Now you shall hear how it fared with them both; for this is a true story.

Little Klaus was obliged to plough all the week for Big Klaus, and to lend him his only horse; and then Big Klaus helped him in turn with his four horses, but only once a week, and that was on Sundays. And proudly did Little Klaus smack his whip over the five horses, for they were as good as his on that one day. The sun was shining brightly, and all the bells were ringing for church, as the people passed by in their

holiday clothes and with their prayer-books under their arm, on their way to hear the preacher, when they saw Little Klaus ploughing with five horses; and he was so pleased, that he kept smacking the whip, and saying: "Gee-ho, my five horses!"

"You must not say so," quoth Big Klaus, "for only one of them is yours."

But no sooner did somebody go past, than Little Klaus forgot he was not to say so, and he called out: "Gee-ho, my five horses!"



LITTLE KLAUS ON SUNDAY

"Now, really, I wish you would hold your tongue," said Big Klaus; "if you say that again, I'll knock your horse on the head, so that he shall drop down dead on the spot; and then there will be an end of him."

"I won't say it again—indeed I won't," said Little Klaus. But when some more people came past and nodded to him, and bade him good-morning, he was so pleased, and thought it looked so well for him to have five horses to plough his field, that he smacked the whip, and cried: "Gee-ho, my five horses!"

"I'll gee-ho your horse for you!" said Big Klaus; and snatching up a hammer, he knocked Little Klaus's only horse on the head, so that he dropped down quite dead.

"Now I have no horse left," said Little Klaus, weeping. He afterwards took the horse's skin off, dried it in the wind, and then put it into a bag, which he slung upon his back, and went to a neighbouring town to sell it.

He had a long way to go, and was obliged to pass through a thick, gloomy forest, where he was overtaken by a storm. He lost himself completely; and before he could find his way again, evening had already set in, and he was too far off either to reach the town or to go back home, before it would be completely dark.

Near the road stood a large farm. The shutters were closed outside the windows, still the light shone through at the top. Little Klaus thought he might, perhaps, obtain leave to spend the night under cover, so he went and knocked at the door.

The farmer's wife opened the door; but when she found what he wanted, she told him to go his ways, for her husband was not at home, and she could not take in strangers.

"Well, then, I must lie down outside," said Little Klaus, as the farmer's wife slammed the door in his face.

Close by there stood a haystack, and between it and the house was a little shed, with a smooth, thatched roof.

"I can lie up there," thought Little Klaus, on perceiving the roof, "and a capital bed it will make. I suppose the stork won't fly down to bite my legs." For a stork was standing above on the roof, where he had built his nest.

Little Klaus now crept up on the shed, where he lay down, and turned himself about in order to get a comfortable berth.

The wooden shutters outside the windows did not reach to the top, so that he could see into the room.

There stood a large table loaded with wine, roast meat, and excellent fish. The farmer's wife and the sexton were sitting at table all alone, and she was pouring him out wine, while he was busy with his fork in the fish, for it was his favourite dish

"I should like to get a bit of that," thought Little Klaus, stretching out his head close to the window. Goodness! what nice pastry he did see, to be sure! It was a regular feast.

He now heard some one riding towards the farm-house, and this was the woman's husband coming home.

He was a very good sort of man, but he had an odd prejudice: he could not bear the sight of a sexton; and if he saw one, he fell into a rage. That was the reason why the sexton had gone to see his wife in his absence; and the good woman had given him the best of everything she had to eat. But when she heard her husband coming she was frightened, and she begged the sexton to conceal himself in a large empty chest. This he did, for he knew the husband could not bear to see a sexton. The wife then hid the wine, and popped all the nice things into the oven; for if her husband had seen them, he would, of course, have asked for whom they had been dished up.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Little Klaus, on his shed, when he saw all the eatables disappear.

"Is there any one above?" asked the farmer, looking up at Little Klaus. "Why are you lying there? Come rather into the house with me."

Now Little Klaus told him how he had got lost, and begged leave to spend the night at the farm.

"That you shall do," said the farmer, "but we must first have something to eat."

The woman welcomed them both in a friendly manner, and spread a long table, and gave them a large dish of gruel. The farmer was hungry, and ate with a good appetite; but Little Klaus could not help thinking of the nice roast meat, the fish, and the pastry, that he knew were hid in the oven.

He had laid the bag containing the horse's skin which he had set out to sell in the next town, under the table at his feet. He did not relish the gruel, so he trod on his bag, when the dried skin squeaked aloud.

"Hush!" said Little Klaus to his bag, at the same time treading upon it again, when it squeaked much louder than before.

"Holloa! What's that you've got in your bag?" asked the farmer.

"Oh, it is a magician," said Little Klaus, "and he says we ought not to be eating gruel, when he has conjured the oven full of roast meat, fish, and wine."

"Zounds!" said the farmer, hastily opening the oven, where he found all the nice, savoury viands which his wife had concealed in it, and which he believed the magician in the bag had conjured up for them. The wife did not say a word, but laid the things on the table; and they ate of the fish, the roast meat, and the pastry. Little Klaus now trod again upon his bag, so that the skin squeaked.

"What says he now?" inquired the farmer.

"He says," answered Little Klaus, "that he has conjured us three bottles of wine, which are standing in the corner, near the stove." So the woman was obliged to fetch out the wine

she had hid, and the farmer drank, and was right merry. He would have liked vastly to have had such a magician as Little Klaus carried about in his bag.

"Can he conjure up a real ghost?" inquired the farmer; "I should like to see one, now I'm in a merry mood."

"Yes," said Little Klaus; "my magician will do anything that I please. Won't you?" asked he, treading on the bag till it squeaked. "You hear he answers 'Yes,' only the ghost is so ugly he is sure we should not like to see him."

"Oh, I'm not afraid. What will he look like?"

"He will look the living image of a sexton."

"Nay, that's ugly indeed!" said the farmer. "You must know I can't abide seeing a sexton. But never mind—as I shall know it is only a ghost, I shall bear the sight more easily. Now, I'm all courage! Only he must not come too near me."

"Now, I'll ask my conjuror," said Little Klaus, as he trod on the bag, and stooped his ear.

"What does he say?"

"He says that you may go and open that chest in the corner, and you'll see the ghost cowering inside it; only you must hold the lid fast, so that he should not escape."

"Will you help me to hold it?" asked the farmer; and he went up to the chest into which his wife had put the sexton, and who was sitting inside in a great fright.

The farmer opened the lid a little and peeped in. "Oh!" cried he, jumping backwards, "now I've seen him, and he is exactly like our sexton. It was a shocking sight!"

So thereupon he must needs drink again, and they drank on till the night was far advanced.

"You must sell me your conjuror," said the farmer; "ask

anything you like for him. Nay, I'll give you at once a whole bushelful of money."

"No, I can't indeed!" said Little Klaus; "only think of all the benefit I can derive from such a conjuror."

"But I should so like to have him," said the farmer, and continued entreating.

"Well," said Little Klaus, at length, "as you were so kind as to give me a night's shelter, I won't say nay. You shall have the conjuror for a bushel of money, only it must be full measure, mind you."

"You shall have it," said the farmer. "But you must take away the chest with you, for I wouldn't let it stay an hour longer in the house; there's no knowing but what he may still be inside it."

Little Klaus then gave the farmer his bag containing the dried skin, and received a bushel of money—full measure—in exchange. The farmer gave him a wheelbarrow into the bargain, to enable him to take away the chest and the bushel of money.

"Farewell!" said Little Klaus, and away he went with his money and the large chest containing the sexton.

At the other end of the forest was a broad, deep river, whose waters were so rapid that one could hardly swim against the stream. A new bridge had just been built over it. Little Klaus now stopped in the middle of the bridge, and said, loud enough to be heard by the sexton: "What shall I do with this stupid chest? It is as heavy as if it were filled with stone. I am tired of trundling it any further, so I'll throw it into the river; if it swims after me till I reach home, it's all well and good—if not, I don't care."

He then seized hold of the chest, and began to lift it up a little, as if he were going to throw it into the water.

"Leave it alone!" cried the sexton, inside the chest; "let me out first."



LITTLE KLAUS'S TRICK

"Oh dear, oh dear!" said Little Klaus, pretending to be frightened; "he is still inside! I must make haste and fling him into the river, that he may get drowned!"

"Oh! no, no, no!" cried the sexton; "I'll give you a whole bushelful of money if you will set me free."

"That is something like!" said Little Klaus, opening the chest. The sexton crept out, pushed the empty chest into the water, and went home, where he measured out a whole bushel of money for Little Klaus. As he had already received one from the farmer, his wheelbarrow was now full of coins.

"I have been well paid for the horse, at all events," said he to himself, when he had reached home, and had shaken out all the money into a heap on the floor of his room. "It will vex Big Klaus when he hears how rich I have become through my only horse; but I shan't tell him exactly how it all came about."

He now sent a lad to Big Klaus to borrow a bushel measure.

"What can he want it for?" thought Big Klaus, as he smeared the bottom of it with tar, that some particles of what was to be measured might stick to it. And sure enough this came to pass; for on receiving back the bushel, three new silver half-florins were adhering to the tar.

"How comes this?" said Big Klaus; and running off to Little Klaus, he inquired: "Where did you get so much money?"

"Oh! it was given me for my horse's skin, which I sold yesterday."

"It was pretty handsomely paid for, seemingly," said Big Klaus, who ran home, and seizing a hatchet, knocked his four horses on the head, and then took their skins to town to sell.

"Skins! skins! who'll buy skins?" he cried through all the streets.

A number of shoemakers and tanners came and inquired what he asked for them.

"A bushel of money for each," said Big Klaus.

"Are you crazy?" cried they; "do you think we measure money by the bushel?"

"Skins! skins! who'll buy skins?" cried he, once more; but to all who asked the price of them, he answered: "A bushel of money."

"He means to make game of us," said they; and the shoemakers took up their stirrups, and the tanners their leather aprons, and fell to belabouring Big Klaus's shoulders. "Skins! skins!" cried they, mocking him; "I'll warrant we'll tan your skin for you, till it is black and blue. Out of the town with him!" hooted they, and Big Klaus ran as fast as he could, for he had never been beaten so thoroughly before.

"Little Klaus shall pay me for this!" said he, on reaching home; "I'll kill him for his pains."

Meantime Little Klaus's old grandmother had died in his house. She had always been very cross and very unkind to him; still he was sorry, and he put the dead body into his warm bed, to see if it would not bring her back to life. Here he left her all night, while he sat in a corner, and slept in a chair, which he had often done before.

In the middle of the night, the door opened, and in came Big Klaus with his hatchet. He knew the place where Little Klaus's bed stood, and therefore went right up to it, and knocked the old grandame on the head, thinking it must be Little Klaus.

"There!" said he; "now you'll not play off any more of your tricks on me!" And he then went home.

"What a wicked man!" thought Little Klaus. "He wanted to kill me. It was lucky for my old grandame that she was already dead, or he would have put an end to her life."

He now dressed his old grandmother in her holiday clothes, borrowed a horse of his neighbour, and harnessed it to his cart, and then placed the old grandame on the back seat, so that she should not fall out when he began to drive, and away they went through the forest. By sunrise they had reached a large inn, at which Little Klaus stopped, and went in for some refreshment.

The landlord was a wealthy man, and he was a good one too; only as passionate as if he had been made of pepper and snuff.

"Good-morning!" said he to Little Klaus; "you are stirring betimes to-day."

"Yes," said Little Klaus; "I'm going to town with my old grandmother. She's outside there, in the cart; for I can't well bring her in. Perhaps you will take her a glass of mead. Only you must speak very loud, for she is hard of hearing."

"Yes, I will," said mine host, pouring out a large glassful of mead, which he carried to the dead grandame, who was sitting upright in the cart.

"Here's a glass of mead from your grandson," said the landlord; but the dead woman did not answer a word, and remained stock still.

"Don't you hear me?" said the landlord. "Here's a glass of mead from your grandson."

This he bawled out a third time, and then a fourth; but as she did not stir, he flew into a passion, and flung the mead into her face, right across her nose, when she fell backwards over the cart; for she had only been set up, and not tied fast.

"Holloa!" cried Little Klaus, rushing to the door, and seizing hold of the landlord; "you have killed my grandmother! Look! here's a great hole in her forehead!"

"What a misfortune!" exclaimed the landlord, wringing his hands. "This all comes of my hasty temper! My dear Little Klaus! I'll give you a bushel of money, and I'll have your grandmother buried, as if she were my own, if you will but say nothing about what has happened; for else my head will be struck off, and that would be rather disagreeable, you know."

So Little Klaus received a whole bushel of money, and the landlord buried the old dame, as if she had been his own grandmother.

When Little Klaus had once more reached home with his load of money, he immediately sent a lad to Big Klaus to borrow a bushel of him.

"What's the meaning of this?" said Big Klaus. "Haven't I struck him dead? I must look into the matter myself." And so he went over himself with the bushel to Little Klaus's dwelling.

"Why, where did you get all that money?" asked he, in great astonishment, on beholding the addition to his neighbour's wealth.

"You killed my grandmother instead of me," said Little Klaus; "so I've sold her for a bushel of money."

"That's handsomely paid for, at all events!" quoth Big Klaus; and hastening home, he seized his hatchet and killed his old grandmother with one blow; after which, he placed her in a cart, and drove to a town where the apothecary lived, and asked if he would purchase a dead body.

"Whose is it? and how did you come by it?" asked the apothecary.

"It is my grandmother's," said Big Klaus; "I struck her dead to get a bushel of money in exchange."

"Lord help us!" said the apothecary; "you are out of your mind! Don't say such things, or your head will be in jeopardy." And he now dilated on the heinousness of the deed he had committed, and told him he was a most wicked man, and would assuredly be punished; all of which frightened Big Klaus to such a degree, that he ran out of the apothecary's shop, jumped into his cart, and drove home like mad. But as the apothecary, and everybody else, believed him to be beside himself, they let him go wherever he pleased.

"You shall pay me for this," said Big Klaus, the moment he was on the high-road,—"that you shall, Little Klaus!" And the moment he reached home, he took the largest bag he could find, and went to Little Klaus, and said: "You have played me another trick: I first killed my horses, and now I've killed my old grandmother, and all through your fault; but you shall never play me any more tricks." And he seized hold of Little Klaus, and popped him into his bag, which he slung across his shoulder, saying: "Now I'll go and drown you!"

He had a long way to go before he reached the river, and Little Klaus was none of the lightest to carry. On passing by the church, the organ was pealing forth, and the people were singing so beautifully, that Big Klaus set down his load beside the church-door, and thought he might as well go in and hear a psalm before he went any further. He felt certain Little Klaus could not get out, and everybody was inside the church; so in he went.

"Heigh-ho!" sighed Little Klaus, turning and twisting about in the bag, but without being able to untie the string. An old

grey-haired drover, with a large staff in his hand, chanced to come by: he was driving a flock of cows and bullocks, and as they pushed against the bag containing Little Klaus, he was thrown down.

"Heigh-ho!" sighed Little Klaus; "I'm very young to be already bound for the other world!"

"And I," said the drover, "who am so old, have not yet had the good luck to reach it."

"Open the bag," cried Little Klaus, "and creep into it instead of me, and you will go thither in a trice."

"With all my heart," said the drover, and opened the bag, when out sprang Little Klaus in a moment.

"But will you take care of my cattle?" said the old man, creeping into the bag, which Little Klaus had no sooner closed, than he went his ways with all the cows and bullocks.

Soon after, Big Klaus went out of the church, and slung his bag over his shoulder, though it seemed to him as if it had become somewhat lighter; for the old drover was not half so heavy as Little Klaus. "How light he now seems!" quoth he. "That comes of my having heard a psalm." So he went towards the river, which was broad and deep, and flung the bag and the drover into the water, exclaiming, in the belief that it was Little Klaus: "There you may lie! and now you won't be able to play me any more tricks."

Thereupon he began to walk home; but, on coming to a cross-way, whom should he meet but Little Klaus, who was driving his cattle along.

"How's this?" said Big Klaus. "Didn't I drown you?"

"Yes," said Little Klaus; "you threw me into the river some half-hour ago."

"But where did you get all these fine cattle?" asked Big Klaus.

"It is sea-cattle," said Little Klaus. "I'll tell you the whole story, and thank you into the bargain for having drowned me; for, since I have escaped, I shall be very wealthy. I was much frightened while I was still in the bag, and the wind whistled through my ears as you flung me down from the bridge into the cold waters. I sank immediately to the bottom; but I did not hurt myself, for the softest and most beautiful grass grows below. The moment I fell upon it, the bag was opened, and the loveliest girl imaginable, dressed in snow-white robes, and wearing a green wreath on her wet hair, took me by the hand, saying: 'Is that you, Little Klaus? First of all, there's some cattle for you. A mile further down the road, there is another herd that I will make you a present of.' I now perceived that the river is a great high-road for the sea-folks. They were walking and driving below, from the sea far away into the land, to the spot where the river ceases. And it was so beautiful, and there was such a quantity of flowers, and the grass looked so fresh! The fishes that were swimming in the water shot past my ears, just as the birds do here in the air. And what handsome people there were!—and what splendid cattle were grazing on the dykes and ditches!"

"But why have you returned hither so soon?" asked Big Klaus. "I should not have done so, since it is so beautiful below."

"Why," said Little Klaus, "it is a piece of policy on my part. You heard me say, just now, that the sea-nymph told me that, a mile further down the road—and by road she meant the river, for she can't journey any other way—there was another

large herd of cattle for me. But I, who know the river's many windings, thought it rather a roundabout way; so I preferred making a short cut, by coming up to land, and crossing right over the fields back to the river; by doing which I shall save almost half-a-mile, and shall reach my sea-cattle all the sooner."

"Oh, what a lucky man you are!" exclaimed Big Klaus. "Do you think that I, too, should obtain some sea-cattle, if I went down to the bottom of the river?"



LITTLE KLAUS DRIVES HIS CATTLE HOME

"No doubt you would," said Little Klaus; "only I can't carry you in a bag to the river, for you are too heavy; but if you like to go there, and then creep into the bag, I would throw you in, with all the pleasure in the world."

"Thank you!" said Big Klaus. "But if I don't get any sea-cattle by going down, I'll beat you famously when I return."

"No—now, don't be so hard upon me," said Little Klaus. And then they went to the river. The cattle, being very thirsty, no sooner saw the water than they ran down to drink.

"Look what a hurry they are in!" said Little Klaus. "They are longing to be below again."

"Now, make haste and help me," said Big Klaus, "or else you shall be beaten." And he crept into the large bag that had been lying across the back of one of the bullocks. "Put in a stone, for fear I should not sink," said Big Klaus.

"There's no fear about that," said Little Klaus; still he put a large stone into the bag, and then gave it a push. Plump! into the river fell Big Klaus, and immediately sank to the bottom. "I am afraid he won't find the cattle," said Little Klaus; and away he drove his own beasts home.

LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS.

"My poor flowers are quite dead," said little Ida. "They were so beautiful yesterday evening, and now all their leaves are faded! Why are they like this?" asked she of the student who sat on the sofa, and whom she liked vastly well. He could tell the prettiest stories, and he cut out such funny things!—hearts with little dancing ladies in them, flowers, and large castles with doors that opened—he was, in sooth, a merry student! "Why do the flowers look so piteous to-day?" repeated she, showing him a nosegay that was quite withered.

"Don't you know what's the matter with them?" said the student. "Why, the flowers went to a ball last night, and that's the reason they hang their heads."

"But flowers can't dance," objected little Ida.

"Yes, but they can!" said the student. "When it is dark, and we are all asleep, they caper about right merrily: they have a ball almost every night."

"Cannot children go to these balls?"



"MY POOR FLOWERS ARE QUITE DEAD," SAID LITTLE IDA

"Yes," said the student, "baby daisies and may-flowers."

"Where do the pretty flowers dance?" asked little Ida.

"Have you not often seen the large palace outside the town, where the king spends the summer, and where there is such a beautiful garden full of flowers? You have seen the swans that swim towards you when you offer them bread-crumbs. Believe me, there are large balls out there."

"I was yesterday in the garden with mamma," said Ida. "But all the leaves were off the trees, and there were no flowers left. What has become of them? I saw so many in summer."

"They are inside the palace," said the student. "Know that as soon as the king and his courtiers return to town, the flowers leave the garden and run into the palace and make merry. It is a sight to be seen! The two most beautiful roses sit upon the throne, and then they are king and queen. All the red cock's-combs place themselves on each side, and make bows—those are the lords-in-waiting. Then all the prettiest flowers come in, and there is a large ball. The blue violets represent the little midshipmen—they dance with hyacinths and crocuses, which they call young ladies; the tulips and the large orange-lilies are old ladies, who watch to see whether the others dance well, and whether all is properly conducted."

"But," asked little Ida, "is there nobody there to hurt the flowers for daring to dance in the king's palace?"

"Nobody knows anything about it," said the student. "The old majordomo, who takes care of the palace, does, to be sure, come in sometimes in the night; but the flowers no sooner hear his keys rattling than they stand stock-still, and hide themselves behind the long curtains, with their heads peeping out. 'I smell flowers here,' says the old majordomo, but he can't see them."

"How delightful!" said little Ida, clapping her hands. "But should I not be able to see the flowers?"

"Yes," said the student, "you need only remember, next time you go there, to look in at the window, and you will perceive them. I did so to-day; and there lay a tall, yellow lily stretched on the sofa—and she was a court lady."

"Can the flowers in the botanical garden likewise join the ball? Can they go such a long way?"

"Certainly," said the student; "they can fly when they please. Have you not seen beautiful red, white, and yellow butterflies? They almost look like flowers, because they have been flowers. They fluttered away from their stems high into the air, and flapped their leaves as though they were little wings, and then they could fly. And as they learned to fly perfectly, they obtained leave to fly about by day as well, and were not obliged to sit still on their stalk at home; and so the leaves ended by becoming regular wings. You have seen this yourself. It may, however, happen that the flowers in the botanical garden never went to the king's palace, or that they do not know what frolics take place there every night. Therefore I'll tell you what—it would astonish the botanical professor who lives close by—you know him, don't you? If you were to go into his garden, and told one of the flowers that there was to be a great ball at the palace yonder, she in turn would tell all the others, and they would all fly away, and then when the professor comes out into the garden, and finds there is not a single flower left, he won't be able to imagine what has become of them all."

"But how can one flower tell the others? For flowers can't speak."

"No, they can't exactly speak," said the student, "but they

can express themselves in dumb show. Have you not often remarked when it blows a little, that flowers nod to each other, and move all their green leaves? That is just as intelligible to them as talking is to us."

"Then does the professor understand dumb show?" asked Ida.

"To be sure! He came into the garden one morning, and saw a large nettle making signs with her leaves to a handsome red pink. She said: 'You are so fascinating, that I feel quite kindly disposed towards you.' But the professor can't endure such things, so he rapped the nettle on her leaves, which are her fingers—only he burnt himself, and since then he does not venture to touch a nettle."

"That is very funny!" said little Ida, laughing.

"How can one put such stuff into a child's head?" said a prosy Chancery counsellor, who had come to pay a visit, and was sitting on the sofa. He could not bear the student, and always grumbled when he saw him cutting out ludicrous and amusing images—such as a man hanging from a gibbet and holding a heart in his hand, because he was a stealer of hearts—or an old witch riding on a broom, with her husband perched on her nose. The Chancery counsellor could not endure such jokes, and would always observe as above: "How can one put such stuff into a child's head? What foolish fancies are these!"

But little Ida thought all the student had told her about her flowers extremely entertaining, and she pondered a great deal on the subject. The flowers hung their heads, for they were tired, as they had danced all night; they were ill to a certainty. She took them to her other playthings, which stood on a neat little table, whose drawer was likewise full of pretty things.

Her doll Sophy lay asleep in a doll's bed, but little Ida said to her: "You really must get up, Sophy, and make shift with sleeping in the drawer for to-night. The poor flowers are sick, and they must lie in your bed, and perhaps they will get well again." And then she took out the doll, who looked vexed, though she did not say a word, for she did not relish being obliged to give up her bed.

Ida then laid the flowers in the doll's bed, and drew the counterpane over them, and said they must now lie quite still, while she made tea for them, that they might be refreshed and able to rise next morning. And she closed the curtains round the little bed, that the sun might not shine into their eyes.

The whole evening she could not help thinking of what the student had told her; and when she went to bed herself, she first peeped behind the window-curtains where stood her mother's beautiful flowers, both tulips and narcissus, and whispered in a low voice: "I know you are going to a ball to-night." But the flowers pretended not to understand, and never moved a leaf—which did not prevent little Ida knowing what she knew.

After she had gone to bed, she lay awake a long while, thinking how pretty it must be to see the flowers dancing in the king's palace yonder. "I wonder whether my flowers really went there?" thought she. And then she fell asleep. But she woke in the night, having dreamed of the flowers and the student whom the Chancery counsellor had scolded. All was quiet in the chamber where she lay; the night-light was burning on the table, and her parents were asleep.

"I wonder whether my flowers are now lying in Sophy's bed?" thought she to herself. "How I should like to know!"



"I KNOW YOU ARE GOING TO A BALL TO-NIGHT"

She raised herself up a little, and looked towards the door that stood ajar; the flowers and all her playthings were in the adjoining room. She listened, and then she thought she heard the keys of the piano touched so lightly and so sweetly as she had never heard before.

"The flowers are certainly all dancing in the other room," thought she. "Oh, how I should like to see them!" But she did not dare to get up, for fear of waking her parents.

"If they would but come in here!" thought she. But the flowers did not come, and the music went on playing so prettily, that she could no longer resist such delights, and she crept out of her little bed, and stole softly to the door, and peeped into the room. Oh dear! What a pretty sight she saw, to be sure!

There was no lamp alight in the room, still it was quite bright; the moon shone through the window down upon the floor, and it was almost like daylight. The hyacinths and narcissus stood in two long rows in the middle of the room; there were none left in the window, where stood the empty flower-pots. The flowers danced most gracefully about the floor, performing hands-round and other figures, and holding each other by their long green leaves as they twirled about. At the piano sat a large yellow lily, which little Ida distinctly remembered to have seen in summer, for she recollected the student saying: "La! how like Miss Lina she is!" Only everybody laughed at him at the time for saying so, though now little Ida really thought the tall, yellow lily was very like the lady; and her attitudes were exactly similar as she sat at the instrument, bending her long, yellow face first on one side, and then on another, and nodding time to the beautiful music! No one observed little Ida. She then perceived a large, blue crocus hop

on to the middle of the table where stood the playthings, and go right up to the doll's bed, and draw aside the curtains, when the sick flowers that lay there immediately rose, and made a sign with their heads to the others, that they wished to dance with them. The old pastil-burner, in the shape of a smoker, whose underlip was broken, stood up, and bowed to the pretty flowers, who did not look sick at all, but jumped down to the others, and were vastly well pleased.

It now seemed as if something fell from the table. Ida looked that way, and saw it was a Saint Nicholas' rod that had jumped down, just as if she belonged to the flowers. She, too, was very elegant, and a little wax doll, who wore just such a broad-brimmed hat as the Chancery counsellor, sat on the top of her. The rod hopped about, on her three red wooden legs, all amongst the flowers, and made a great clatter, for she danced the mazurka, which the flowers could not do, because they were too light, and would not have been able to stamp so violently.

The wax doll that was riding on the rod now suddenly grew, both in size and length, and turning round upon the paper flowers, exclaimed aloud: "How can one put such stuff into a child's head? What foolish fancies are these!" And the wax doll then looked exactly like the Chancery counsellor with his broad-brimmed hat, and appeared every bit as yellow and as cross as he; but the paper flowers struck his thin legs, and then he shrivelled up again, and became a little wax doll once more. It was very funny to see, and little Ida could not help laughing. The rod continued dancing, and the Chancery counsellor was obliged to dance too—there was no help for it, whether he made himself taller and bigger, or whether he remained a little yellow wax doll with a broad black hat. The

other flowers then said a good word for him, particularly those who had lain in the doll's bed, and then the rod desisted. At the same moment, there was a loud knocking inside the drawer, where Ida's doll, Sophy, was lying amongst so many other toys. The pastil-burner ran and laid himself down on the edge of the table, and began to pull out the drawer gently. Then Sophy got up, and looked round her in surprise. "There seems to be a ball here," said she. "Why did nobody tell me of it?"

"Will you dance with me?" said the pastil-burner.

"Dance with you, indeed!" said she, turning her back upon him. She then sat on the edge of the drawer, thinking that probably one of the flowers would come and ask her to dance; but none of them did. She then coughed: "Hem! ahem!" Still nobody came. The pastil-burner then danced all alone, and not badly either.

As none of the flowers seemed to take any notice of Sophy, she slid down from the drawer on to the floor, so as to make a great noise; and then the flowers all came crowding round her to ask whether she was not hurt, and they were very polite to her, especially those who had lain in her bed. But she was not at all hurt, and Ida's flowers thanked her for the use of her pretty bed, and were very friendly, and took her into the middle of the room where the moon shone, and danced with her, while all the other flowers formed a circle around them. So now Sophy was pleased, and said they might keep her bed, for she did not mind lying in the drawer the least in the world.

But the flowers replied: "We thank you heartily, only we shall not live long enough to avail ourselves of your courtesy. To-morrow we shall be quite dead. But tell little Ida she must bury us in the garden, near the spot where her little canary-bird

lies, and then in summer we shall wake up again, and be prettier than ever."

"No, you must not die," said Sophy, kissing the flowers; and then the door opened, and a whole bevy of beautiful flowers came in dancing. Ida could not imagine whence they came, and concluded they must be all the flowers from the king's summer palace. Two splendid roses led the way, and wore little gold crowns on their heads, for they were a king and a queen. Then came the prettiest pinks and wallflowers, who bowed to all present. They brought music with them. Large poppies and peonies blew through pea-shells till they were red in the face. Wild hyacinths and little white snowdrops jingled as if they had bells in them. It was a most remarkable orchestra! Then came many other flowers, who danced together: the blue violet and the red amaranth, the daisy and the may-flower. And all the flowers kissed each other, and a lovely sight it was.

At length the flowers bade each other good-night, and then little Ida crept back to bed, where she dreamed of all that she had seen.

As soon as she had risen, on the following morning, she ran to the little table to see if the flowers were still there. She drew back the curtains of the little bed, and there they lay, only still more faded than the day before. Sophy, too, was in the drawer, where she had been put away; but she looked very sleepy.

"Are you thinking of what you have to tell me?" said little Ida.

But Sophy looked quite stupid, and did not say a word.

"You are naughty," said Ida. "Yet they all danced with you." And then she took a little paper box, on which pretty



BURYING IDA'S FLOWERS

birds were painted, and opened it, and laid the dead flowers inside. "That will serve as a coffin for you," said she, "until my cousins come to see me, when they shall help me to bury you in the garden, that you may grow up again by next summer, and be much more beautiful still."

Her cousins were two lively boys, named Jonas and Adolph, whose father had given them each a new bow, which they brought to show Ida. She told them of the poor flowers having died, and they were allowed to bury them. The two boys went before, with their bows on their shoulders, and little Ida followed, with the dead flowers in the pretty box. A little grave was dug in the garden. Ida kissed the flowers, and then laid them, box and all, in the ground; and Adolph and Jonas shot their arrows over the grave, for they had neither guns nor cannon.

THE SHIRT-COLLAR.

THERE was once a dandy, whose goods and chattels consisted of a boot-jack and a hair-brush; but he had the smartest shirt-collar in the world, and we are going to hear the story of this same shirt-collar. The shirt-collar had grown so old, that he now began to think of marrying, when he happened to find himself in the same wash-tub as a garter.

"Mercy on us!" cried the shirt-collar: "I never saw anything so slim, so dainty, so delicate, or so elegant before. May I make so bold as to ask your name?"

"I shall not tell you," said the garter.

"Where do you live?" asked the shirt-collar.

But the garter was by nature rather shy, and did not know how to answer.

"I suppose you are a belt," said the shirt-collar—"a belt to fasten some under-clothes. I see that you serve for use, as well as for show, my little lady."

"You must not speak to me," said the garter. "I am sure I cannot have given you any encouragement to do so."

"When one is as pretty as you are," said the shirt-collar, "is not that encouragement enough?"

"Get away—don't come so near me," said the garter. "You seem to have no manners."

"I am a fine gentleman, sure enough," said the shirt-collar. "I possess a boot-jack and a hair-brush."

This was not true, for it was his master who owned these things. But he was a boaster.

"Don't come so near me," said the garter. "I'm not accustomed to such behaviour."

"Ridiculous nonsense!" said the shirt-collar.

And then they were taken out of the wash-tub, and starched, and hung over a chair in the sunshine; after which they were laid on the ironing-board. And now came the glowing flat-iron.

"Mistress widow," said the shirt-collar—"little mistress widow, I feel very warm. I am quite metamorphosed: my creases are all smoothed down. You are burning a hole in me! Oh, dear! I offer myself for your acceptance."

"You, you ragamuffin!" said the flat-iron, as she drove proudly over the shirt-collar; for she imagined herself to be a steam-engine, that rolls over a railway, and draws carriages. So she called him ragamuffin.

The edge of the shirt-collar was somewhat frayed, so the scissors were in request to cut it smooth.

"Oh!" said the shirt-collar, "you are certainly a first-rate dancer. How well you lift up your leg! I never saw anything so elegant in my life. No human being could imitate you."

"I should think not," said the scissors.

"You would deserve to be a countess," said the shirt-collar. "My only worldly possessions consist of a dandy, a boot-jack, and a frizzing-comb. I wish I had a county to lay at your feet."

"What! is he wooing me, forsooth?" said the scissors, who

waxed indignant, and gave such a violent snip, that the shirt-collar was in a fair way to be cashiered.

"Then I must make a proposal to the hair-brush," thought the shirt-collar. "What remarkably beautiful hair you have, my little missy! Have you never thought of becoming engaged?"

"You may well imagine that I have thought about it," answered the hair-brush; "for I am engaged to the boot-jack."

"Engaged!" cried the shirt-collar. There was now nobody left whom he could woo, therefore he pretended to despise courtships in general.

A long time after, the shirt-collar lay in a bag at the paper-mill. There was a large company of rags; the fine ones and the coarse ones herding together respectively, as it was proper they should. They had all a great deal to relate, but especially the shirt-collar, who was a mighty boaster.

"I have had so many sweethearts," said the shirt-collar: "they left me no peace of my life. But it must be confessed that I was a very fine gentleman, and a very stiff one too. I had a boot-jack and a brush, that I never used. You should have seen me in those days, when I lay on one side! I shall never forget my first love. She was a girdle: so dainty, so soft, and so elegant; and she flung herself into a wash-tub for my sake. There was a widow, too, who was glowing with love for me; but I would not have her, and she grew black with fretting. Then there was a first-rate dancer, who gave me the wound I now suffer from; for she was such a passionate creature! My own hair-brush was in love with me, and lost all her hair with grief at my coldness. Yes, I have gone through a great many adventures of the same sort; but what I am most

sorry for is the garter—I mean the girdle, who threw herself into the wash-tub. I have a deal upon my conscience, and it is high time I should be whitewashed, by being made into paper."

And this the shirt-collar eventually became. All the rags were converted into white paper, and the shirt-collar may have become the identical piece of paper we see here, on which this story is printed. And this was a punishment for his having boasted so abominably of things that had never taken place. So let us take such a warning to heart, and not imitate his example; or else, how do we know but what we may be popped into the rag-bag, and made into white paper, on which our whole story, the secret passages and all, will be printed, and we be forced to circulate, and tell it to all the world, like the shirt-collar?





COUNTRY NEIGHBOURS.

ONE might really have fancied something very important was going forward in the duck-pond, but such was not the case. All the ducks that were resting on the surface of the water, or standing upon their heads—for they can do so—now swam in a bustle towards the land; and the traces of their feet were imprinted on the wet ground, while their quacking echoed far and near. The water, but lately as clear and smooth as a looking-glass, was now all in motion. A moment before, one might have seen every tree and every bush that stood near the old cottage, with the holes in its roof and the swallow's nest, and, above all, the large rose-bush literally crammed with roses, all distinctly mirrored on its surface. The rose-bush covered the wall, and hung over the water, in which one could see the whole landscape like a picture, only that everything was upside

down. But when the water was ruffled, it all swam away, and the picture vanished. Two feathers, dropped by the fluttering ducks, were rocking to and fro; on a sudden they made a rush as if the wind were coming, but it did not come, and they were obliged to lie still, while the water became smooth and quiet



THE DUCK-POND

once more. The roses could again behold their image. They were most lovely, though they knew it not themselves, for nobody had ever told them so; the sun peeped beneath the tender leaves, the sweetest fragrance breathed around, and

everything felt as we do when we are rejoiced at the thoughts of our own happiness.

"How beautiful is existence!" said each rose. "The only wish I have is to kiss the sun, who is so warm and so bright; and I would likewise fain kiss the roses down there in the water that are our counterparts, as well as the little birds in the nest down yonder. There are birds, too, up above, who pop their heads out of their nest, and cry 'tweat!' in a faint voice, and have no feathers as their father and mother have. They are good neighbours, both those above and those below. How beautiful is existence!"

The youngsters above and below—those below being only the reflection in the water—were sparrows; their parents were likewise sparrows, who had taken possession of an empty swallow's nest of the year before, and now inhabited it as if it had been their property.

"Are those ducklings' children that are swimming yonder?" asked the young sparrows, when they spied the ducks' feathers on the water.

"If you must ask questions, do, at least, ask rational ones," said the mother. "Can't you see they are feathers, living stuff for clothes, such as I wear, and such as you will wear, only ours is finer? I wish, however, we had them up here in our nest, for they keep one warm. I am curious to learn what frightened the ducks so terribly; surely they could not be frightened at us, though I did say 'tweat!' to you pretty loud. The thick-headed roses ought to know what it was, by rights; only they know nothing, and do nothing but look at themselves and smell. I am heartily tired of such neighbours!"

"List to the sweet little birds above," said the roses.

"They, too, now begin to try and sing; only they cannot manage it. But all in good time. What pleasure it will afford us! It is pleasant to have such cheerful neighbours!"

All on a sudden, a couple of horses came prancing along to be watered; one of them was mounted by a peasant lad, who had thrown off all his clothes except his broad-brimmed, black hat. The lad, who whistled like a bird, rode into the deepest part of the pond, and, on passing the rose-bush, plucked a rose, which he placed in his hat, and then rode away, thinking himself extremely smart. The other roses looked after their sister, and asked themselves: "Whither is she going?" But nobody knew.

"I should like to go forth into the world," said one of them, "though our verdant home is very lovely. The sun shines so warmly all day, and the heavens shine yet more beautifully at night, as we can see through all its little holes." They meant the stars, for they knew no better.

"We make the house very lively," said the mother sparrow; "and as people say that a swallow's nest brings good luck, they are glad of us. But as to our neighbours, a rose-bush like that against the wall only occasions dampness. Probably it will be removed, and then perhaps it will be replaced by, at least, one ear of wheat. Roses are good for nothing but to be looked at and smelt, or, at best, to be placed in a hat. I have heard, from my mother, that they fall every year. The peasant's wife then preserves them in salt, and then they receive a French name, that I neither can nor choose to pronounce, and are sprinkled on the fire in order to obtain a nice smell from them. Such is their career; they are only calculated to please the eye and the nose. So now you know all about them."

When the evening closed in, and the gnats were disporting

in the warm air and amidst the red clouds, the nightingale came and sang to the roses that the beautiful resembles sunshine in this world, and that the beautiful lives for ever. But the roses thought the nightingale was singing her own praises, which might easily be imagined; for that the song could refer to themselves was a thing they never even dreamed of. Still they were delighted with it, and often wondered whether all the little sparrows would likewise become nightingales. "I understood this bird's song quite well," said the young sparrows. "There was only one word that I could not make out. What is the beautiful?"

"Nothing of any consequence," replied the mother sparrow; "it merely relates to externals. Up yonder at the manor-house, where the pigeons have a house of their own, and are fed daily with peas and corn—I have myself shared their meal occasionally, and so shall you, in time; for my maxim is: 'Tell me with whom thou goest, and I will tell thee what thou doest' —well, up yonder at the manor-house, as I was saying, there are two birds, with green necks and a tuft on their heads, who can spread out their tails like a large wheel, that shines with so many colours that it dazzles one's eyes to look at it. These birds are called peacocks, and they represent the beautiful; but if they were only plucked of some of their feathers, they would not look different from all of us. And I would have plucked them too, had they not been so large."

"I will pluck them!" squeaked out the smallest sparrow, who had no feathers of his own yet.

In the cottage lived a young couple, who loved each other very dearly, and were active and industrious, so that everything around them looked nice and neat. Early on Sunday morning,

the young wife came out and gathered a handful of roses, and put them into a glass of water that she placed on the chest.

"I now see that it is Sunday," said the husband, kissing his little wife.

They then sat down, and read their psalm-book, holding each other's hand, while the sun shone down on the roses and on the young couple.

"This sight is really too monotonous," said the mother sparrow, who could see into the room from her nest; and away she flew.

The following Sunday was like the last, for fresh roses were placed in the glass every Sunday morning; yet the rose-bush was still blooming in all its beauty. The young sparrows were now fledged, and would have liked to fly with their mother, but she would not allow it; so they were obliged to stay at home. Away she flew; but so it happened, that before she perceived it, she fell into a horse-hair snare that some boys had fastened to a branch. The horse-hair entangled her leg as tightly as though it would cut it through, and what fright and anguish it occasioned! The boys now came running up, and seized the bird in no very gentle manner.

"It's only a sparrow," said they. Nevertheless, they did not let her fly, but took her home with them; and every time she screeched, they knocked her on the bill.

In the farm-yard they happened to find an old man who knew how to prepare shaving-soap and washing-soap, whether in cakes or in balls. He was a merry old fellow, who wandered about the country. When he saw the youngsters bringing home the sparrow, which they complained they could do nothing with, he said: "Shall we make it very smart?" A cold shudder ran through the sparrow's frame at these words. The old man then

took from his box, in which were all sorts of pretty colours, a quantity of shell gold, and desiring the youngsters to fetch the white of an egg, he besmeared the sparrow all over, and then laid on the gold, when the mother sparrow was gilt from head to foot. But she thought little of such finery, and trembled in every limb. Then the soap-maker tore out of his old jacket a piece of the red lining, which he cut into scollops, so as to look like a cock's comb, and stuck it on the sparrow's head.

"Now you shall see gold-coat flying," said the old man, setting free the sparrow, who flew away in deadly alarm in the glare of a bright sun. And how she did shine to be sure! Not only all the sparrows, but even a crow, old stager as he was, were frightened at so strange a sight; yet they flew behind her, in hopes of learning what foreign bird it could be.

Half wild with distress and panic, she flew homewards, but was near sinking to the earth for want of strength. The flock of birds that pursued her kept increasing; and some of them even attempted to peck her.

"Look at him! look at him!" they all cried.

"Look at him! look at him!" cried the youngsters, as the sparrow approached her nest. "He must surely be a young peacock, for he displays all manner of colours, that dazzle one's eyes, just as our mother told us. Tweat! This is the beautiful!" and they pecked at the bird with their little beaks, so that she could not reach the nest, and felt too faint to say: "Tweat!" much less: "I am your mother!" And the other birds now fell upon the sparrow, and plucked her until she fell bleeding into the rose hedge.

"Poor creature!" said all the roses, "be easy, we will conceal you. Lean your little head against us."

The sparrow spread out her wings once more, and then closed them around her, and lay dead amongst her neighbours, the fresh and lovely roses.

"Tweat!" sounded from the nest. "It is inconceivable what can detain our mother so long. Can this be a trick of hers, to intimate to us that we must now take care of ourselves? She has left us the house as a legacy, but to which of us is it to belong when we shall have families of our own?"

"Ay, it won't suit me to have you stay with me when I increase my household by a wife and children," observed the smallest.

"I shall have more wives and children than you, most likely," said the second brother.

"But I'm the eldest," cried a third. They now grew warm, and beat each other with their wings, pecked at each other with their bills, till bounce!—one after another was buffeted out of the nest. There they lay in a rage, with their heads hanging on one side, and twinkling with their upturned eyes. That was their way of being sulky.

They could fly a little, and by dint of practice they grew better skilled; and, at last, they agreed upon a watchword, in order to recognize each other, in case they should meet at some future time in the world. It consisted of a peculiar sort of 'tweat!" and scratching the ground three times with the left foot.

The youngster who remained in possession of the nest, spread himself out as broad as ever he could, for he was now the proprietor of the house. But his glory did not last long; for in the night red flames broke out from the windows of the cottage, the thatched roof caught fire, and blazed up terrifically, the whole house was burned down, and the young sparrow perished at the

same time, while the young couple fortunately escaped with their lives.

When the sun rose once more, and all nature looked refreshed, as if after a peaceful slumber, nothing remained of the cottage but a few charred rafters, that leaned against the chimney, which had now become its own master. Volumes of smoke were still rising from the ruins; but outside, the unscathed rose-bush was blooming as fresh as ever, and every flower, and every sprig, was mirrored in the clear water.

"Oh! how beautifully the roses are blooming in front of that burned-down cottage!" cried a passer-by. "A lovelier picture can scarce be imagined. I must sketch it."

And the stranger took a little book, with blank leaves, from his pocket, for he was a painter, and made a pencil sketch of the smoking ruins, the charred rafters, and the chimney that overtopped the whole, and seemed tottering more and more; and quite in the foreground stood the large and blooming rose-bush, which made a beautiful effect. Indeed, the whole picture had been suggested by the rose-bush.

Later in the day, two of the sparrows that had been born here happened to come by. "Where is the house?" asked they. "Where is the nest? Tweat! All is burned down, and with it our stalwart brother. That is what he gained by keeping the nest. The roses have come off famously; there they still stand with their rosy cheeks. They don't care a snap for their neighbours' misfortunes, I'm very sure. So I won't speak to them; besides, the place here is very ugly, according to my view of the subject." So away they went.

One fine, bright autumn day, when one might almost have fancied it was still the height of summer, a flock of pigeons,

grey, white, and speckled, were running about in front of the large steps in the nicely-kept court-yard of the manor-house, and glittering in the sunshine. The old mother dove said to the young ones: "Place yourselves in groups! Place yourselves in groups! It looks so much better."

"What are those little grey creatures that are running about behind us?" asked an old dove, with red and green eyes. "Little greycoats! little greycoats!" cried she.

"They are sparrows—who are good sort of creatures; and, as we have always been reckoned kind, we will allow them to pick up some corn with us, for they don't interrupt our talk, and they scrape a leg so civilly."

Sure enough, they were scraping a leg, and the left one into the bargain, and saying "Tweat!" besides. And thus they recognized each other, for they were the sparrows that once belonged to the nest on the cottage that had been burned down.

"There is plenty of good eating here," said the sparrows.

The pigeons strutted about, bridling up, and each intent on his own thoughts and opinions.

"Do you see that cropper pigeon?" said one, speaking of another; "do you see how he swallows peas? He eats too much, and the best of everything besides. Coo! coo! How the nasty, ugly, wicked creature sets up his crest! Coo! coo!"

And their eyes gleamed with malice. "Place yourselves in groups! Place yourselves in groups! Little greycoats! Little greycoats! Coo! coo! coo!" Thus did their bills run on without intermission, and it will be the same a thousand years hence.

The sparrows ate heartily, and listened attentively, and even placed themselves in a row with the others; but it did not suit them. So now, having eaten their fill, they left the

doves, exchanged their opinions about them, and then slipped under the palings that enclosed the garden, and finding a sitting-room door open, one of them, grown bold by his good living, hopped upon the threshold, saying: "Tweat! I'll venture thus far."

"Tweat!" said another; "I'll venture that, and something more besides," and into the room he forthwith hopped. Nobody was there, seeing which, the third sparrow flew still further into the room, saying: "Neck or nothing! It is an odd human nest, any way,—and what have they set up here? What can it be?"

Right before the sparrows stood the roses, in full bloom, reflected in the water, and the charred rafters were leaning against the chimney, that towered above the ruins. But how can it be? How did all these come to be in a room at the manor-house?

The three sparrows now attempted to fly away over the chimney; but they hit against a flat surface; for it was all a picture—a fine large picture—that the artist had painted from a little sketch.

"Tweat!" said the sparrows. "It is nothing! It only looks like something. Tweat! this is the beautiful. Can you see the fun of it? I can't," and off they flew, for some persons had just entered the room.

A year and a day had now flown past. The doves had often cooed, not to say quarrelled—naughty creatures that they were! The sparrows had frozen in the winter and lived in clover during the summer, and they had all mated or married, or whatever one pleases to call it. They had little ones, and, of course, each fancied his own the prettiest and the wisest; one flew this way, and the other that; and when they met, they

recognized one another by their "tweat!" and their scratching three times with the left leg. The eldest remained a spinster, and had neither nest nor young ones: her favourite wish was to see a large town, so she flew to Copenhagen.

A large house, of various bright colours, was to be seen there, close by the castle and the canal, on which floated ships laden with apples and casks of wine. The windows were broader below than above, and when the sparrow peeped through the panes, the room appeared to her like a tulip, streaked with the gayest hues and shadows. In the middle of the tulip stood white human beings made of marble, and others of plaster, which, in the eyes of sparrows, is one and the same. On the roof was a metal chariot, with metal horses, driven by a metal Goddess of Victory. This was Thorwaldsen's museum.

"How it glitters!—how it glitters!" said the old maiden sparrow. "This must be the beautiful. Tweat! Only this is larger than a peacock." She remembered from her childhood what her mother had acknowledged to be the most eminent example of the beautiful. She now flew down into the court-yard, where the walls were tastefully painted, to represent palm-trees and foliage, while in the centre of the court bloomed a fine, large rose-bush, that spread its sweet, fresh branches over a tombstone. Thither the spinster sparrow flew, seeing others of her own sort. "Tweat!" said she, accompanied by three scratches with her foot—a mode of greeting she had often practised throughout the year without receiving a corresponding answer, for those who are once dispersed do not meet every day. But this greeting had now become a habit with her.

To-day, however, two old sparrows and a young one replied: "Tweat!" and scratched three times with their left legs.

"Ah! good-morning to you,—how do?" These were two old ones, formerly belonging to the nest, and a young one of the same family. "To think of our meeting here! This is a very aristocratic sort of a place, but there's not much to eat: this is the beautiful! Tweat!"

And a great many persons now came out of the side rooms, where stood the splendid marble statues, and approached the grave, beneath which lay the remains of the celebrated master, whose great skill had formed the statues. All stood with enthusiastic countenances round Thorwaldsen's grave, and some few gathered the fallen rose-leaves to preserve them. All had come from afar: some from powerful England, others from Germany, others, again, from France. A very handsome lady plucked one of the roses, and concealed it in her bosom. So the sparrows thought that the roses were all-powerful here, and that the whole house had been built for their sake, which they thought was rather too much honour paid them; still, as everybody showed their regard for them, they would not be backward in paying their respects.

"Tweat!" said they, sweeping the ground with their tails, and casting a side-glance at the roses, which they had not looked at long, before they were convinced that they were their old neighbours. And such was the case. The painter who had sketched the rose-bush near the burned-down cottage, had since obtained leave to transplant it, and had given it to the architect, for finer roses were never seen, and the architect had planted it on Thorwaldsen's grave, where it continued blooming as the image of the beautiful, and shed its rosy, fragrant leaves that they might be carried to foreign lands as a remembrance of the hallowed spot.

"Have you obtained an appointment in the town?" asked the sparrows.

The roses nodded, for they recognized their grey neighbours, and were rejoiced to see them once more.

"How delightful it is," said the roses, "to live and to blossom, to meet with old friends again, and to see cheerful faces daily! It is as if every day were a holiday."

"Tweat!" said the sparrows; "yes, they really are our old neighbours. We recollect their origin near the pond. Tweat! how they have risen to honours! Ay, some people are born with a silver spoon in their mouths. But there's a withered leaf, as I can plainly see."

And they pecked at the leaf until it fell down.

But the rose-bush continued to bloom fresher and greener than ever; and the roses gave out their fragrance in the sunshine, on Thorwaldsen's grave, to whose deathless name they thus became linked.



THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEP.

HAVE you ever seen an old wooden cupboard, quite black with age, and ornamented with carved scrolls and foliage, and nondescript figures? Just such a one stood in a sitting-room; it was a legacy left by the great-grandmother of the family—it was covered from top to bottom with carved roses and tulips. There were the oddest scrolls, out of which peeped little stags'-heads with their antlers. But in the middle of the cupboard was represented the full-length figure of a man; it is true he was rather ridiculous to look at, and was grinning—for one could not call it laughing—and, moreover, he had goats' legs, little horns upon his head, and a long beard. The children always called him General-and-Lieutenant-General-Goat-Bandy-legs-Field-sergeant—there's a name for you! rather difficult to pronounce, certainly, nor are there many who obtain such a

title—but to have had him carved was something indeed! However, there he was. He was always looking at the table under the looking-glass, where stood a pretty little china shepherdess. Her shoes were gilt, and her dress was ornamented with a red rose, besides which she had a golden hat, and a crook; she was marvellously pretty to behold. Close by her side stood a little chimney-sweep, his clothes and hands as black as a coal, though likewise of china; he was just as clean and as delicate as another, and as to his being a chimney-sweep, it was only that he represented one; the potter might just as well have made a prince out of him, for it would have been all one!

There he stood so elegantly with his ladder, and with a countenance as white and as rosy as a girl's; indeed, this was, properly speaking, a fault, for his face ought to have been rather black. He stood close to the shepherdess; they had both been placed where they stood; and having been so placed, they became betrothed to each other. They were well matched, being both young people, made of the same china, and equally fragile.

Close to them sat another figure, three times their size. He was an old Chinaman, who could nod his head. He also was made of china, and pretended to be the grandfather of the little shepherdess, but this he could not prove. He maintained that he was entitled to control her, and therefore, when General-and-Lieutenant-General-Goat-Bandy-legs-Field-sergeant asked for the little shepherdess's hand, he had nodded consent.

"You will obtain in him," said the old Chinaman, "a husband whom I verily believe to be of mahogany. You will become the lady of General-and-Lieutenant-General-Goat-Bandy-legs-Field-sergeant! and he has a whole cupboardful of plate, to

say nothing of what may be hid in the spring-drawers and secret compartments."

"I don't choose to live in the dark cupboard," said the little shepherdess. "I have heard say that he has eleven china wives in it already."

"Then you can become the twelfth!" said the Chinaman; "to-night, as soon as you hear a creaking in the old press, your wedding shall take place, as true as I'm a Chinaman." And thereupon he nodded his head, and fell asleep.

But the little shepherdess cried, and looked at her sweetheart, the china chimney-sweep.

"I entreat you," said she, "to go with me into the wide world, for we can't remain here."

"I will do anything you please," said the little chimney-sweep; "let us set out immediately. I think I can maintain you by my profession."

"I only wish we were safe down from the table!" said she. "I shall not be easy till we are out in the wide world."

And he comforted her, and showed her how she might set her little foot on the carved projections and gilt foliage of the feet of the table; besides, he took his ladder to help, and so they managed to reach the floor. But when they looked towards the old cupboard, they saw it was all in an uproar. The carved stags poked out their heads, raised their antlers, and turned their necks. The General-and-Lieutenant-General-Goat-Bandy-legs-Field-sergeant was cutting tremendous capers, and bawling out to the Chinaman: "They are running away! they are running away!"

The fugitives were somewhat frightened, and jumped into the drawer in the window-seat.

Here lay several packs of cards, that were not complete, and a little doll's theatre, which had been built up as neatly as could be. A play was being represented, and all the queens, whether of hearts or diamonds, spades or clubs, sat in the front row, fanning themselves with their tulips; and behind them stood all the knaves, and showed that they had heads both upwards and downwards, as playing-cards have. The play was about two lovers, who were not allowed to marry; and the shepherdess cried, for it seemed just like her own story.

"I cannot bear it," said she. "I must leave the drawer." But when they had reached the floor, and looked up at the table, there was the old Chinaman awake, and shaking himself—and down he came on the floor like a lump.

"The old Chinaman is coming!" shrieked the little shepherdess, falling on her china knee, for she was much afflicted.

"I have thought of a plan," said the chimney-sweep. "Suppose we creep into the jar of perfumes that stands in the corner. There we might lie upon roses and lavender, and throw salt into his eyes if he comes near us."

"That would be of no use," said she. "Besides, I know that the old Chinaman and the jar were formerly betrothed; and there always remains a degree of good-will when one has been on such terms. No! we have nothing for it but to go out into the wide world!"

"Have you really the courage to go out into the wide world?" asked the chimney-sweep. "Have you reflected how large it is, and that we can never come back hither?"

"I have," said she.

And the chimney-sweep looked hard at her, and said: "My way lies through the chimney. Have you really the

courage to go with me, not only through the stove itself, but to creep through the flue? We shall then come out by the chimney, and then I know how to manage. We shall climb so high that they won't be able to reach us, and quite at the top is a hole that leads out into the wide world."

And he led her to the door of the stove.

"It looks very black," said she; still, in she went with him, both through the stove and through the flue, where it was as dark as pitch.

"Now we are in the chimney," said he; "and look! there shines the most beautiful star above!"

And it was a real star in the sky that seemed to shine down upon them, as though it would light them on their way. And now they climbed, and crept—and a frightful way it was—so steep and so high! But he went first, and smoothed it as much as he could; he held her, and showed her the best places to set her little china foot upon, and so they managed to reach the edge of the chimney-pot, on which they sat down—for they were vastly tired, as may be imagined.

The sky and all its stars was above them, and all the roofs of the town lay below. They saw far around them, and a great way out into the wide world. It was not like what the poor shepherdess had fancied it. She leaned her little head on her chimney-sweep's shoulder, and cried till she washed the gilding off her sash. "This is too much!" said she, "it is more than I can bear. The world is too large! I wish I were safe back on the table under the looking-glass. I shall never be happy till I am once more there. Now I have followed you into the wide world, you can accompany me back, if you really love me."

Then the chimney-sweep tried to reason with her, and spoke



ON THE EDGE OF THE CHIMNEY-POT.

of the old Chinaman, and of General-and-Lieutenant-General-Goat-Bandy-legs-Field-sergeant; but she sobbed so violently, and kissed her little chimney-sweep, till he could not do otherwise than what she wished, foolish as it was.

And so they climbed down the chimney with infinite difficulty. They next crept through the flue and the stove, which were anything but pleasant places; and then they stood in the dark stove, and listened behind the door, to catch what might be going forward in the room. All was quiet; so they peeped out—and behold! there lay the old Chinaman sprawling in the middle of the floor. He had fallen down from the table, when he attempted to pursue them, and lay broken into three pieces: his whole back had come off in one lump, and his head had rolled into a corner. The General-and-Lieutenant-General-Goat-Bandy-legs-Field-sergeant stood where he always had done, and was wrapped in thought.

"This is shocking!" said the little shepherdess; "my old grandfather is broken to pieces, and by our fault! I shall not be able to survive such a mishap!" And so saying, she wrung her little hands.

"He can be riveted!" said the chimney-sweep—"he can be riveted! Do not take on so! If they cement his back, and put a proper rivet through his neck, he will be just as good as new, and will be able to say as many disagreeable things to us as ever."

"Do you think so?" said she. And then they crept up to the table, where they formerly stood.

"Since we have got no further than this," said the chimney-sweep, "we might have saved ourselves a deal of

ble."

"I wish grandfather was riveted," said the shepherdess; "I wonder if it costs much?"

And riveted sure enough he was. The family had his back cemented, and an efficient rivet run through his neck. He was as good as new, except that he could no longer nod.

"You have become proud since you were broken to shivers," observed General-and-Lieutenant-General-Goat-Bandylegs-Field-sergeant. "Methinks there is no reason why you should be so captious. Am I to have her or not?"

And the chimney-sweep and the little shepherdess looked most touchingly at the old Chinaman. They were afraid he would nod. But he could not; and it would have been derogatory to have confessed to a stranger that he had a rivet in his neck. And so the china couple remained together, and blessed the grandfather's rivet, and loved each other till they were broken to pieces.



THE PRINCE IN DISGUISE.

THERE was once a poor prince, who had but a very small kingdom ; still, as it was large enough to support a wife, he had a mind to marry.

It was, to be sure, rather bold of him to venture to say to the emperor's daughter, "Will you have me?" Yet, venture he did ; for his name was celebrated both far and near, and there were scores of princesses who would gladly have said "Yes"; but the question was, whether she would say so or not?

Now we shall see, presently.

Over the grave of the prince's father there grew a rose-tree, and a beautiful rose-tree it was. It only bloomed once in every five years, and then it only bore one rose—but what a rose it was! Its perfume was so exquisite, that everybody forgot their cares and sorrows when they smelt it. Besides this, he had a nightingale, who sang as though all the lovely melodies in the world had been assembled in her little throat. He resolved to make the princess a present of this rose and this nightingale,

and accordingly they were placed in two large silver caskets, and sent to her.

The emperor had them brought to him in a large room, where the princess was playing at "There came a knight a-wooing" with her ladies-in-waiting; and when she saw the silver caskets containing the presents, she clapped her hands for joy.

"If it could but be a kitten!" said she. But out came the rose-tree with the beautiful rose.

"How very elegantly it is made!" exclaimed all the court ladies.

"It is more than elegant," said the emperor; "it is charming."

But the princess, having felt it, was ready to cry.

"Fie, papa!" said she; "it is not an artificial rose, but merely a natural one."

"Fie!" echoed all the ladies-in-waiting; "it is merely a natural rose."

"Let's see what the other casket may contain before we fly into a passion," said his majesty; and then came out the nightingale, and sang so sweetly that nobody at first thought of any spiteful fault-finding.

"*Superbe! charmant!*" cried the court ladies; for they all chattered French, however badly.

"The bird reminds me of the late empress's musical-box," observed an old lord-in-waiting; "it has the same tone and the same execution."

"Yes," said the emperor, crying like a little child.

"But it is not a real bird, I trust?" asked the princess.

"Yes, it is a real bird," said those who had brought it.

"Then let it fly away," said the princess, who would not hear of the prince coming to pay his respects to her.

But he was not to be discouraged. He painted his countenance brown and black, drew his cap over his forehead, and then knocked at the palace-door.

"Good-morning, emperor," said he; "can I find any employment at the palace?"

"Why," said the emperor, "there are so many that apply for places that I really don't know whether we can do anything for you; however, I'll bear it in mind. But, now I think of it, I am in want of somebody to take care of the swine; for I have a vast number of pigs."

So the prince became the imperial swineherd. They gave him a wretched little room near the pig-sty, and here was he obliged to remain. But he sat and worked the whole day, and by the evening he had made a neat little pipkin and round it was a set of bells, and the minute the pot began to boil, they fell to jingling most sweetly, and played the old melody—

"Oh! dearest Augustine,
All's gone clean away!"

But the most ingenious part of the business was, that if one held one's finger in the steam of the pipkin, one could immediately smell what dinner was cooking on every hearth in the town. This was indeed something far superior to the rose.

The princess now happened to be walking out with her ladies-in-waiting; and on hearing the melody, she stood still, and appeared highly delighted; for she could play "Oh! dearest Augustine"—it was, indeed, the only tune she could play, but then she played it with one finger.

"Why, that's what I play!" cried she. "He must be a very intellectual swineherd. I say, go and ask him the price of his instrument."

So one of the ladies-in-waiting was obliged to go down to speak to him; but she put on pattens.

"How much do you ask for your pipkin?" inquired the lady.

"I ask ten kisses from the princess," said the swineherd.

"Good gracious!" said the lady-in-waiting.

"I will not take less," answered the swineherd.

"Well, what did he say?" asked the princess.

"I dare not repeat it," replied the lady-in-waiting.

"Then whisper it into my ear."

"He is very ill bred!" observed the princess, as she turned away.

But after walking a few steps, the bells jingled so sweetly—

"Oh! dearest Augustine,
All's gone clean away!"

that the princess said, "I say, go and ask him if he'll take ten kisses from my ladies-in-waiting."

"I'm much obliged to you," said the swineherd; "either I'll have ten kisses from the princess, or else I'll keep my pipkin."

"How tiresome he is!" said the princess. "Then you must stand round me, so that nobody may see me."

Accordingly the ladies-in-waiting stood before her, and spread out their clothes, and the swineherd got the ten kisses, and she obtained the pipkin.

And how delighted she was! All that evening, and the whole day following, was the pipkin set to boil; and there was not a hearth in the kingdom on which anything could be cooked



KISSING THE SWINEHERD

without their knowing it—from my lord-chamberlain's down to the shoemaker's. The ladies-in-waiting clapped their hands, and jumped with joy.

"We now know who is going to eat sweet porridge and an omelette; or who will have gruel and broiled meat—how interesting to be sure!"

"Very interesting," quoth the mistress of the robes.

"But you must not tell, because I am the emperor's daughter."

"Of course not," said they in a breath.

The swineherd, or rather the prince—though they took him to be a real swineherd—did not let a day go by without working at something; and so he next fashioned a rattle which only required springing to play all the waltzes, galops, and polkas known since the creation of the world.

"Really, this is superb!" said the princess, as she passed by. "I never heard a finer composition. I say, go in and ask him what's the price of the instrument. Only I will not give any more kisses."

"He wants a hundred kisses from her royal highness!" said the lady-in-waiting, who had been in to inquire.

"He must be crazy, I should think," said the princess, turning away. But after going a few steps she stopped short. "We must encourage the fine arts," said she, "and I am the emperor's daughter. So tell him that he shall have ten kisses as before, and he may take the rest from my ladies-in-waiting."

"Nay, but we should not much relish that," said the ladies-in-waiting.

"Nonsense," said the princess; "if I can kiss him, surely

you may. Remember I give you board, and lodging, and wages." And so the lady-in-waiting was obliged to go in once more to speak to him.

"A hundred kisses from the princess," said he, "or it's no bargain."

"Stand before me," said she; and the ladies-in-waiting did as they were bid, and he began kissing the princess.

"What's that mob after near the pig-sty?" asked the emperor, who had just stepped into the balcony. He rubbed his eyes, and then put on his spectacles. "Why, it's the ladies-in-waiting, who are after some trick, I'll be bound. I must go down and see." So he drew up his slippers, for they were down at heel.

My goodness! what haste he did make!

As soon as he had reached the yard, he walked very softly, and the ladies-in-waiting were so busy counting the kisses, that there might be no cheating, that they did not perceive the emperor. He stood on tip-toe. "What's the meaning of this?" cried he, on seeing them kissing away at such a rate, and he flung his slipper at their heads, just as the swineherd had received the eighty-sixth kiss.

"Get out of my sight!" said the emperor, who was very angry; and both the princess and the swineherd were turned out of his empire.

There she stood and wept, while the swineherd grumbled, and the rain fell in torrents.

"What a miserable creature I am!" sobbed the princess; "would that I had married the handsome prince! Oh, how unhappy I am!"

The swineherd then went behind a tree, and rubbed the black

and brown paint off his face, and threw off his shabby clothes, and appeared in his princely garb, and looked so handsome, that the princess involuntarily curtseyed to him.

"I have now learned to despise you," said he. "You refused an honourable prince; you could not appreciate a rose or a nightingale; but you could stoop to kiss a swineherd to obtain a toy. You must now suffer the punishment."

So saying, he went back into his kingdom, and shut the door in her face; and she was left outside to sing—

"Oh! dearest Augustine,
All's gone clean away!"







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